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SOME OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF ETHICS[1]

PROFESSOR C. D. BROAD

ETHICS, in the sense in which that word is used by philosophers, may be described as the theoretical treatment of moral phenomena. I use the phrase "moral phenomena" to cover all those facts and only those in describing which we have to use such words as "ought," "right and wrong," "good and evil," or any others which are merely verbal translations of these.

Moral phenomena fall into three distinct, though closely interconnected groups, viz. Moral Judgment, Moral Emotion, and Moral Volition. Suppose that I know or believe that I *ought* to keep a promise, though it might be more convenient to break it; that it is *wrong* to inflict useless pain on an innocent person, though it might be pleasant to score off him in public; that love is a *good* emotion and jealousy an *evil* one; and so on. These bits of knowledge or belief are instances of Moral Judgments. Suppose that I believe myself to have behaved wrongly on a certain occasion and that I feel *remorse* or *self-disapproval*, as distinct from mere fear of punishment or embarrassment at being found out, on that account. These feelings will be instances of Moral Emotion. Suppose, finally, that I have to decide between two alternative courses of action, one of which I believe to be *right*, and the other of which is pleasanter in itself or more attractive in its probable consequences. In so far as I am influenced in my decision by the thought that one of them is *right* and that the others would be wrong, and by the desire to do what is right as such, this is an instance of Moral Volition.

ANALYSIS OF MORAL JUDGMENTS

The first and most fundamental problem of Ethics is about the

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nature of Moral Judgments and the concepts "ought," "right," "good," etc., which are the most characteristic elements in them. Suppose I assert, deliberately and reflectively and not merely talking like a parrot, that A on a certain occasion ought not to have broken a promise which he had made to B. Then, *prima facie*, the following things seem to be true: (1) That in uttering this sentence, which I will call a "moral sentence in the indicative mood," I am asserting an *opinion* (correct or incorrect) which I hold, and am not merely expressing an emotion which I feel. (2) That the opinion which I am asserting is not merely about my own feelings or wishes or beliefs. In saying that A ought to have kept his promise to B,I seem to be asserting about A and B and their relationship something which is no more about me and my attitude towards them than if I had asserted that A is B's second cousin. (3) That what I assert about A's breach of his promise to B, viz that it was *wrong* and *ought not* to have happened, is something unique and peculiar, though perfectly familiar and intelligible to everyone. It cannot be expressed by any form of words which does not contain the words "right" or "ought" or some others which are obviously mere verbal translations of them.

Now all these *prima facie* appearances have been questioned on more or less plausible grounds by competent moral philosophers, and this has led to some of the most fundamental discussions in Ethics. I will now say something of the various alternative views which have been held on these points.

(1) *The Interjectional Analysis.* The most radically sceptical view is that what appear to be moral judgments are not really *judgments*, i.e. assertions of knowledge or opinion, at all; but are merely expressions of a certain kind of *emotion*. It is alleged that, when a person utters such a sentence as, "This is wrong," or "That is evil," he is really only expressing a certain kind of anti-emotion towards this or that. It is true that he uses a form of sentence which inevitably suggests that he is asserting an opinion and not merely expressing an emotion. For the sentence is of the same grammatical form as if he had said, "This is triangular," which is certainly an assertion of opinion. But, it is alleged, the grammatical form is misleading in the case of moral sentences in the indicative.

I propose to call this theory the *Interjectional Analysis*. On this view there are no moral judgments; there are only what might be called "ostensible moral judgments." Moral sentences in the indicative mood are really interjections, like "Hurrah!" or "Blast!", masquerading as assertions of opinion.

(2) *The Autobiographical Analysis.* Suppose we reject the Interjectional Analysis. Suppose we hold that, when a person utters a moral sentence in the indicative, he really is making a moral judg-

ment. Then the next most sceptical view is that what he is asserting is simply that he feels a certain kind of emotion, *pro* or *anti*, towards the subject which he pronounces to be right or wrong, good or evil. I shall call this the *Autobiographical Analysis.*

It must be noticed that it could take two different forms. (i) It might be held that, when I judge that so-and-so is right, what I am asserting is simply that I here and now am feeling towards so-and-so a certain kind of pro-emotion. If so, my judgment is analogous to "This butter tastes nice" uttered by a person while eating that butter. (ii) It might be held that what I am asserting is that I have a *disposition* to feel this kind of pro-emotion towards such persons or acts or situations as so-and-so. If so, my judgment is analogous to "I like butter." A person might truly say that he likes butter even if, on the occasion when he said so, he found the taste of butter repulsive because, e.g., he was feeling bilious. I shall call these two forms of the Autobiographical Analysis respectively the *Occurrent* and the *Dispositional* form.

It might be thought that there is no difference between the Interjectional Analysis and the Occurrent Form of the Autobiographical Analysis. This would be a mistake. There is a difference between merely expressing an emotion by means of an exclamation, e.g. ejaculating "Damn!" when one is annoyed at losing one's collar-stud, and asserting that one is feeling such and such an emotion towards such and such an object, e.g. saying, "I am annoyed at finding that I have lost my collar-stud." An animal, e.g., can express an emotion of anger by snarling, but it cannot make the judgment which a man would express by saying, "I am angry with so-and-so." On the Interjectional Analysis to utter a moral sentence in the indicative is like expressing a feeling of annoyance with so-and-so by exclaiming, "Damn you!"; on the Occurrent Form of the Autobiographical Analysis it is like stating that one is feeling annoyed with so-and-so.

(3) *The Statistical Analysis.* Suppose next that both forms of the Autobiographical Analysis are rejected also. It is still possible to suggest an analysis in terms of pro-emotion and anti-emotion. The suggestion would be that, when I judge that so-and-so is right, what I am asserting is that all or most men, or all or most members of some more restricted class, e.g. Englishmen or Etonians, have a disposition to feel a certain kind of pro-emotion towards persons or acts or situations like so-and-so. On this view moral judgments may be compared to such a judgment as "Jazz music is popular." This might be truly asserted by a person even if he were himself indifferent to jazz music or heartily disliked it. I shall call this the *Statistical Analysis.*

Before going further I want to make two remarks about the three

alternative kinds of analysis which I have been describing. (i) All three of them are stated in terms of certain emotions which a person may feel towards himself or towards another person or towards an action or a relationship. They may therefore all be described as *Emotional-Reaction Theories.* (ii) The Interjectional Analysis and the two forms of Autobiographical Analysis agree with each other and differ from the Statistical Analysis in the following respect. The former may be described as *intra-subjective.* For, according to them, when a person utters a moral sentence in the indicative, what he is doing is either to express an emotion which *he* is feeling or to make an assertion to the effect that *he* is feeling a certain emotion or has a disposition to feel it. The Statistical Analysis, on the other hand, may be described as *trans-subjective.* For, according to it, when a person utters such a sentence he is asserting something about a whole class of persons which may or may not happen to include himself.

(4) *The Objective Analysis.* Finally, let us suppose that all forms of Emotional Reaction Theory are rejected. Then we must hold that a person who makes a moral judgment is ascribing to its subject a certain property which would belong to it even if no-one had ever contemplated it or felt any kind of emotion towards it. On this view A's judgment that B's act of telling a lie on a certain occasion was wrong is comparable, in this respect at any rate, to a person's judgment that the weather in Cambridge on a certain day was rainy. He may indeed have been *influenced* by his emotions to make this assertion; but what he asserts is not *about* the emotions of himself or anyone else towards the weather in Cambridge on that day. Let us call this the *Objective Analysis* of moral judgments.

Naturalistic v. Non-naturalistic Theories

The question of analysis brings us to another question which is very closely connected with it. Are moral predicates, such as *right, ought* and *good,* unique and peculiar; or can they be completely analysed and defined in terms of non-moral predicates? Theories which answer this question in the affirmative are called *naturalistic;* those which answer it in the negative are called *non-naturalistic.* The following would be typical examples of naturalistic theories. "*Better* conduct means conduct that comes later in the course of evolution and is more complex and unified than earlier conduct of the same kind." "*Right* action means action which tends to promote the stability and increase the complexity of society." "To say that a person *ought* to do so-and-so means that, if he does not, he will be punished either in this life by his fellow-men or in the next by God."

It should be noticed that, if any form of the Emotional Reaction analysis be true, the question is answered automatically in favour of naturalism. Ethics becomes a branch of psychology. Nevertheless, there would remain a somewhat similar question even for those theories. It would take the following form. "Is the emotion which we express, or assert ourselves to feel or to have a disposition to feel, or which we assert that most members of a certain class have a disposition to feel, when we utter a moral sentence in the indicative an emotion of a quite unique kind? Or is it just a combination of emotions, e.g. fear, love, hope, etc., each of which can occur in non-moral contexts?"

If the Objective Analysis be correct, the question of Naturalism v. Non-naturalism remains quite open, and special arguments are needed to answer it.

The importance of the question is this. If Non-naturalism be true, Ethics is an autonomous science with an irreducibly peculiar subject-matter, though it will still have very intimate connexions with certain other sciences, such as psychology, sociology, etc. But, if Naturalism be true, Ethics is not an autonomous science; it is a department or an application of one or more of the natural or the historical sciences. Now the reduction of a plurality to a unity is a source of intellectual satisfaction, and therefore philosophers have a strong motive for trying to produce a workable naturalistic theory

Right-making and Good-making Characteristics

We pass now to another very important problem. It may be introduced as follows. If a person says of anything that it is right or that it is wrong, it is always sensible to ask, "Why? What *makes* it right or *makes* it wrong, as the case may be?" The sort of answers that one expects to such questions are: "Because it will relieve pain," "Because it is a breach of promise," and so on. Similar remarks apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to good and evil. If anything is said to be good or to be evil, it is always sensible to ask what makes it so. The sort of answers which one expects to get are: "Because it is an act of courage," "Because it is a feeling of pleasure at another man's misfortune," and so on.

We may generalize this as follows. Moral characteristics are always dependent upon certain other characteristics which can be described in purely neutral non-moral terms. Let us call those non-moral characteristics whose presence in anything confers rightness or wrongness on it *right-making* and *wrong-making* characteristics. And let us define *good-making* and *bad-making* characteristics in a similar way.

We will begin with right-making and wrong-making characteristics.

On the face of it there is a whole mass of these. E.g. being a breach of promise, being a deliberately misleading answer to a question, being an intentional infliction of needless pain, and dozens more, are characteristics which may plausibly be said to make an act wrong.

Now an extremely important question is whether we can discover any kind of systematic unity among all these various right-making and wrong-making characteristics. Can we reduce them to a few fundamental ones? Can we perhaps reduce them all to a single fundamental one? Moral philosophers have naturally tried their hardest to do this, since it would plainly be tidier and more satisfactory to the intellect if it could be done.

When we reflect on this problem we notice the following fact. At first one is inclined to say that *every* lie is as such wrong, that *every* breach of promise is as such wrong, and so on. But one soon finds that there are cases where this is not plausible; e.g., is it certain that a lie told to an invalid or a breach of promise to a child is wrong when the results of telling the truth or keeping the promise would be extremely bad for him? Again, there are cases where any possible action will, e.g., be either a lie or a breach of promise. Suppose, e.g., that A has told me a secret on my promise not to reveal it, and that B afterwards asks me a question which I can neither answer truly nor refuse to answer at all without revealing the secret. Then whatever I may do in response to B's question will be either a breach of my promise to A or a lie told to B. But we are not prepared to say that whatever I do in such a situation will be wrong. On the contrary, we should hold that in some cases it would be my duty to tell the truth to B and thus break my promise to A, whilst in others it would be my duty to keep my promise to A and thus deceive B.

For such reasons it is necessary to modify our notion of right-*making* and wrong-*making* characteristics and to talk instead of right-*tending* and wrong-*tending* characteristics. An intentionally deceptive answer to a question *tends* as such to be wrong, and so too does a breach of promise. If an act were nothing but an answer to a question, it would be right if true and wrong if false. If an act were nothing but the keeping or the breaking of a promise, it would be right if it were the former and wrong if it were the latter. But, if an act is *both* a true answer to a question and a breach of a promise, we can say only that it *tends* to be right in the former respect and *tends* to be wrong in the latter. The right act in such circumstances will be the one that makes the best compromise between the various moral claims on the agent, after allowing due weight to the relative urgency of each claim. We might compare the claims which arise from various right-tending and wrong-tending characteristics to forces of various magnitudes and directions acting on a body at

the same time. And we might compare what I will call the *resultantly right course of action* to the course which a body would pursue under the joint action of such forces. Looking at the situation from the point of view of the agent, we can say that each right-tending and wrong-tending characteristic imposes on him a *component obligation* of a certain degree of urgency; and that his *resultant obligation* is to make the best compromise that he can between his various component obligations.

When we consider the various right-tending and wrong-tending characteristics we find that they can be divided into two great groups, which I will call *teleological* and *ostensibly non-teleological.*

(1) One characteristic which tends to make an act right is that it will produce at least as good consequences as any alternative open to the agent in the circumstances. And one which tends to make it wrong is that it will produce less good or more evil consequences than some other act open to the agent. We can sum this up by saying that the property of being *optimific* is a very important right-tending characteristic. I call it *teleological* because it refers to the goodness of the ends or consequences which the act brings about.

(2) Now there are also many characteristics which are certainly right-tending or wrong-tending but are not *prima facie* reducible to the property of being optimific. No doubt truth-telling and promise-keeping do in the end and on the whole lead to better consequences than lying and breach of promise. But most people do not feel that this is the reason why truth-telling and promise-keeping tend to be right. They feel that the mere fact of being asked a question or having made a promise imposes on one an urgent component obligation to answer truly or to perform what one has promised, quite independently of whether the consequences will be good or bad. I therefore call these right-tending and wrong-tending characteristics *ostensibly non-teleological.*

We have already seen that various ostensibly non-teleological right-making characteristics may lead to conflicting component obligations. It is also true that the ostensibly non-teleological obligation to tell the truth, e.g., may conflict with the teleological obligation to produce as much good and as little evil as possible Consider, e.g., the following case. A commanding officer knows that one of his subordinates, who has been killed, has displayed disgraceful cowardice. No one else knows this or will ever do so unless the officer divulges it. The dead man's mother asks the officer leading questions about the circumstances of her son's death. If he tells the truth the mother will be made miserable for life and no one will be a penny the better. If he tells a suitable lie the mother will retain her ideals and be made happy and no one will be a penny the worse. Here there seems to be a plain conflict between the

teleological obligation to produce as much good and as little evil as possible and the ostensibly non-teleological obligation to answer questions truly.

Ostensibly non-teleological obligations can be subdivided into two groups, which I will call *non-distributive* and *distributive*. Truth-telling is an example of the former. Distributive obligations are concerned with the right distribution of benefits and disadvantages. Suppose that I am the sole executor and trustee under the will of a certain rich man. He has made two wills. In the first he has distributed his property more or less equally among a number of needy and deserving persons and institutions. In the second he has left the whole of it to a worthless rich relative. I am the only person now alive who knows that the second will has been made, and I could safely destroy it and carry out the provisions of the first. It is obvious that by doing this I should produce more good and less evil than by divulging the second will. Nevertheless I am under an extremely urgent ostensibly non-teleological obligation to distribute the property in accordance with the testator's second will, whilst my purely teleological obligation would be to distribute it in accordance with the first.

Now much the most important attempt which has been made to reduce all the many and various right-tending characteristics to a single one is the theory called *Utilitarianism*. According to this one's only ultimate obligation is teleological; the only ultimate reason why any act is right is that it is optimific, and the only ultimate reason why any act is wrong is that it would produce less good or more evil consequences than some other act open to the agent in the circumstances. All ostensibly non-teleological obligations, whether distributive or non-distributive, are secondary and derivative from the one teleological obligation to act optimifically. The only reason why there is a component obligation to keep promises, to answer questions truly, and so on, is that on the whole such action will secure the best consequences in frequently recurring kinds of situation, such as having made a promise, being asked a question, etc. Suppose that a situation should occur in which, when all the remote, secondary, and collateral consequences as well as the immediate ones have been taken into account, the result of telling a lie or breaking a promise would be better than that of telling the truth or keeping the promise. Then it will be right to lie or to break one's promise, and wrong to tell the truth or keep faith.

It is plain that, if Utilitarianism can be made to cover the facts without distorting them, it has several advantages. (1) It gives us the intellectual satisfaction of reducing a litter of disconnected grounds of obligation to a single one. (2) To many people it does

seem difficult to believe on reflexion that it can *ever* be right to do what will have worse consequences when one could have done something else which would have better consequences. (3) Utilitarianism gives a plausible explanation for the various degrees of urgency of the various ostensibly non-teleological component obligations; and it provides, in theory at any rate, a rule for compounding such obligations when several of them co-exist and conflict with each other.

I will now say something about *good*-tending and *bad*-tending characteristics. The general principles are the same as in the case of right-tending and wrong-tending ones. It is plain that *prima facie* there are a number of different characteristics which tend to make a person or an experience or an action good, and a number which tend to make it bad. Now several of these may be present together in a single subject; and the question whether it is resultantly good or resultantly bad, and, if so, to what degree, will depend on the nature and the proportion of its various good-tending and bad-tending characteristics.

Here again there is naturally a strong desire among philosophers to try to reduce the litter of various good-tending characteristics to a single good-making one. The best known effort in this direction is the theory known as *Ethical Hedonism*. This theory involves the following propositions. (1) Nothing is either good or bad in the primary sense except actual experiences. (2) The only characteristic of an experience which makes it good is its pleasantness, and the only one which makes it bad is its unpleasantness. (3) The degree of goodness of a pleasant experience depends jointly on its duration and on the degree of its pleasantness. According to this theory anything other than an experience which is called "good" is so called in a secondary and derivative sense, viz. in so far as it contributes or tends to contribute to the occurrence of pleasant experiences and the non-occurrence of unpleasant ones.

If both Utilitarianism and Ethical Hedonism could be accepted, we should have introduced the greatest possible unity into the region of moral phenomena. Unfortunately each of them seems to be too simple to cover the facts without distorting them.

Before leaving this part of the subject I will make two remarks connecting it with the topic of Analysis which I discussed earlier.

(1) Suppose that a person has persuaded himself that there is one and only one right-making characteristic, e.g. that of being optimific, or one and only one good-making characteristic, e.g. pleasantness. Then he is very liable to make the following mistake. He is apt to think that he has proved that "right" *means* optimific or that "good" *means* pleasant, i.e. that he has provided an analysis of rightness or of goodness, as the case may be. All that he has

really shown in the first case, e.g., is that, if the words "right" and "optimific" are names of two different characteristics, then these two mutually involve each other. That is quite different from showing that the two words are really names for the same characteristic, and that what is meant by "optimific" is the analysis of what is meant by "right." The distinction can be made quite clear by a simple non-ethical example. To be an equilateral triangle means to be a plane figure bounded by three equal straight lines. To be an equiangular triangle means to be a plane figure with three angles, all of which are equal. Evidently these are two different characteristics. But they mutually involve each other; for any figure which has either property necessarily has both. It seems not unlikely that many people who have thought that they have given a naturalistic analysis of moral judgments have made this mistake; and that really they have done no more than to produce reasons for thinking that there is one and only one right-making or good-making characteristic, and have then proceeded to identify rightness or goodness with this.

(2) In discussing right-tending and good-tending characteristics I have spoken in terms of the Objective Analysis of moral judgments. It is important to notice that the same problem exists in a slightly modified form if we accept the Emotional-Reaction Analysis. In that case what we have called a "right-tending" or a "good-tending" characteristic will be one which tends to call forth the peculiar emotion in its *pro*-form. What we have called "conflicts of component obligations" will depend on the fact that the same act may have features which call forth the *pro*-emotion and others which call forth the *anti*-emotion. What we have called "resultant obligation" will be connected with one's total emotional reaction to an object which has some features that tend to call forth the *pro*-emotion and others which tend to call forth the *anti*-emotion.

Intention and Rightness

When a person performs a deliberate action he does so in view of his knowledge and beliefs about the present situation and with certain expectations about the consequences which will ensue. These two factors are closely connected; for his expectations about the consequences are in part determined by his knowledge or beliefs about the present situation. I shall say that an act is *intentional* in respect of (1) all those features and only those which the agent knows or believes to be present in the initial situation, and (2) all those consequences and only those which he expects to follow. Now a person's information on both these matters will always be incomplete and it may be in part mistaken. No man can foresee the

very remote consequences of an action; and anyone may be mistaken about some of its immediate consequences, either through miscalculation or through inadequate or inaccurate information about present circumstances. Suppose, e.g., that a person receives a letter purporting to come from his old nurse and that he is moved to send her a postal-order in the belief that she is in want and with the expectation that it will enable her to buy comforts. It may be that in fact the nurse has died, that the letter has been written in her name by a dishonest relative, and that the money will be spent by him on drink. What this man intended to do was to bring relief to his old nurse; what he in fact did was to enable a dishonest stranger to get drunk.

Now, if we consider the agent's intention in this example, we are inclined to say that he acted rightly. But, if we consider the actual facts of the situation and the consequences, we are inclined to say that he acted wrongly and that the right action would have been to refuse to send money and to have reported the matter to the police. Thus we are faced with the problem of the relation between intention and rightness or wrongness.

This question may be approached in the following way. Any act which can be called "right" or "wrong" can be viewed from two standpoints, viz. that of the agent who does it and that of the patient who is affected by it. In general these will be different persons, though there are special cases in which the agent and the patient are the same person at an earlier and a later stage of his life. Now in considering whether an act is right or wrong we must view it, so to speak, from both ends, i.e. in relation to the patient and in relation to the agent. In relation to the patient an act is right if and only if it fulfils his claims on the agent, or, as we say, "gives the patient his rights in the matter concerned." From this standpoint the agent's intention is irrelevant. In relation to the agent an act is right if and only if it is done with the intention of fulfilling the patient's claim and giving him his rights in the matter. From this standpoint anything in the actual consequences which is outside or contrary to the agent's intention is irrelevant.

I propose to call any act which in fact fulfils the claims of the patient upon the agent *materially right,* regardless of whether the agent intended it to have this consequence or not. I propose to call any act which was intended by the agent to bring about the fulfilment of the patient's claims *formally right,* regardless of whether it does in fact have that result or not. A *perfectly right* act in a given situation would be one that was both formally and materially right. It would be an act which was intended by the agent to give to the patient his rights and which did in fact do so. Owing to incomplete or incorrect information on the part of the agent, or to defects in his

powers of inference, it may happen that an act which is formally right is materially wrong, or that one which is formally indifferent or wrong is materially right. It should be noticed that the notion of material rightness is, in a certain sense, more fundamental than that of formal rightness. For what is formally right for the agent to do is to try to secure to the patient what is materially right for him to have done to him.

There remains, however, a further serious complication to be considered. So far I have supposed that the agent makes no *ethical* mistakes. I have supposed only that he may have incomplete or inaccurate information about *matters of fact* and may make mistaken inferences on such matters from his information. I have assumed that he knows what ought to happen to the patient if his factual information were adequate and accurate. But of course the agent *may* be ignorant or mistaken about *ethical* matters too.

Suppose, e.g., that a person is brought up in a community in which it is held to be a duty to carry on a family vendetta, and that he accepts that opinion. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that it is mistaken, and that it is wrong to kill a member of another family simply because one of his ancestors killed one of one's own. Suppose that this person is in a situation in which he can either kill a certain member of the other family or let him escape. Whichever alternative he chooses we are inclined to say that he acts rightly, and we are about equally inclined to say that he acts wrongly. If he kills the patient, he intentionally does to him what he believes ought to be done to him, but this is in fact what ought not to be done to him. If he lets the patient escape, he intentionally does to him what he believes ought not to be done to him, but this is in fact what ought to be done to him.

It is plain that we are here concerned with yet another sense of "right" and "wrong." I propose to call it *subjective* rightness and wrongness. An act is subjectively right if and only if the effects which the agent expected it to have on the patient are those which he believed that the patient is entitled to have produced in him.

The relations between the various senses of "right" which I have distinguished may be summarized as follows. (1) A person could be sure of doing a *perfectly right* act only if both his relevant factual and his relevant ethical beliefs were complete and correct and if he had made no mistakes in his inferences. It is therefore plain that, if a person ever does a perfectly right act, it is largely a matter of luck that he does so. (2) A person could be sure of doing a *formally right* act, even if his factual information were incomplete or inaccurate and he made mistakes in his inferences, provided that the effects which he *thinks* his act would have upon the patient are such as the latter *really would* be entitled to if his nature and situa-

tion were as the agent *believes* them to be. Therefore when an agent's relevant ethical information is incomplete or incorrect it is a matter of luck if he performs a formally right act. (3) A person could be sure of doing a *subjectively right* act, no matter how inadequate or inaccurate his factual and his ethical beliefs might be or how mistaken he may be in his inferences, provided only that the effects which he *thinks* his act will have on the patient are such as he *thinks* that the latter would be entitled to if his nature and situation were as the agent *believes* them to be. It is therefore plain that a person who is ignorant, stupid, and misinformed about facts, who is incapable of drawing reasonable inferences, and who is insensitive or crazy in his opinions about what is materially right and wrong, may perform acts that are subjectively right. So it is not surprising that such acts may inflict the most terrible wrongs on those whom they affect.

The problems which we have been discussing arise because we fail to distinguish these three senses of "right" and "wrong," and use these words in a vague way to include them all, sometimes having one meaning predominantly before our minds and sometimes another.

Motives and their Ethical Function

Among the characteristics which an agent believes an action to have, and among the consequences which he expects to follow from it, some will attract him towards doing it, some will repel him from doing it, and others will leave him indifferent. Suppose, e.g., that a person contemplates throwing a bomb at a ruler in a public procession. He may expect that the effects will include the death of the ruler, the death or injury of a number of innocent bystanders, and the breakage of a number of windows in the neighbourhood. The first part of the expected consequences may attract him, the second may repel him, and the third may leave him indifferent. A person's total motive *in* doing a certain action consists of all that he believes about the action itself and all that he expects about its consequences, which either attracts him towards or repels him from doing it. The former constitutes his total motive *for* doing it, and the latter his total motive *against* doing it. If, in fact, he does it, he does it *because of* his motives for doing it and *in spite of* his motives against doing it. Suppose, e.g., that the anarchist in my example is in general a humane man and that he decides to throw the bomb at the ruler. Then his motive for doing so is the attractive belief that it will kill the ruler; his motive against doing so is the repellant belief that it will kill or injure innocent bystanders; and he acts because of the former and in spite of the latter motive.

It is plain that there are two aspects to any motive, viz. a cognitive and a conative-emotional aspect. The cognitive aspect of a motive is the fact that it is a *belief* about the nature of the action or an *expectation* about its consequences. The conative aspect is the fact that the agent has a certain disposition to be *attracted or repelled* which is excited by this belief.

When we know what was a person's intention in doing an action and what consequences in fact followed from it we are in a position to judge whether it was subjectively right, or formally right, or perfectly right, without needing to know anything about his motives in doing the action. But it is quite obvious that a man's motives in doing an action have a very important bearing on *some* kind of moral judgment which we make either on the agent or on the action. This fact is indicated in ordinary speech by such phrases as, "He did the right thing from the wrong motive."

Suppose, e.g., that a man performs an act which is intended to secure the just punishment of a criminal. He will foresee that the criminal will suffer directly and his family and friends indirectly, so this must be included as part of his intention. Now it may be that the belief that the law will be vindicated, that other men will be deterred from committing similar crimes, and that the criminal may be reformed is an attracting one; that the belief that the criminal and his family will suffer is a repelling one; and that the agent acts because of the former and in spite of the latter. If so, we should be inclined to say, not only that his action was right, but also that his motives in doing it were good. But it may be that the belief that the law would be vindicated, other men deterred, and the criminal perhaps reformed, exercised no attraction on the agent. He had, perhaps, had a quarrel with the criminal or was jealous of him; and what attracted him was his belief that the criminal and his family would suffer. If so, the action would still be right in any of the senses which we have considered, but we should certainly say that the agent's motive in doing it was bad.

I have no doubt that the words "right" and "wrong" have, in addition to the ambiguities which we have already cleared up, the further ambiguity that they are sometimes used to include a reference to the agent's motives and sometimes used without such a reference. I think that it is on the whole more convenient explicitly to exclude reference to motives from our description of right and wrong action. One important reason for drawing the line at this point is the following. A person can choose which of several alternative possible actions he will do. But he cannot, in the same sense, choose which of several alternative motives shall attract him towards or repel him from doing a certain action. Now the predicates "right" and "wrong" are commonly understood to be confined to that which is

directly dependent on a person's volition, in the sense in which his actions are so and his motives in acting are not.

Specifically Moral Motivation and Emotion

It seems, *prima facie*, that human beings have a great many different desires, and that these cannot all be reduced to a single head. Naturally attempts have been made to do this. The most celebrated of them is the theory called *Psychological Hedonism*. This asserts that the only ultimate objects of desire for any person are to get and to prolong pleasant experiences and to avoid and cut short unpleasant ones. It is now generally admitted by competent authorities that this theory cannot be maintained, and that such plausibility as it has depends upon certain verbal ambiguities.

Now, *prima facie*, there appears to be among our other desires and aversions one which is specifically moral. It seems that, if one believes that a certain course of action would be *right*, that belief stirs a certain conative disposition in one and is a motive for doing it. If, on the other hand, one believes that an action would be *wrong*, that belief stirs the same conative disposition and is a motive against doing it. These desires and aversions are often opposed to very strong non-moral desires and aversions, and they feel very peculiar in comparison with the latter whether they happen to oppose them or to reinforce them. For this reason they are commonly marked out by the name *Feelings of Obligation*, and some philosophers have thought it inappropriate to classify them as desires and aversions. For my part I see no objection to classifying them in this way, provided that one does not lose sight of their peculiarities. I propose to describe this peculiar kind of desire and aversion as the *Desire to do what is Right as such*.

Now the following questions arise at this point. (1) Is there really a desire to do what is right as such, or is the opinion that there is mistaken? Is it the case that, whenever a person thinks that he is attracted towards a course of action by the belief that it would be right or repelled from it by the belief that it would be wrong, he is really being attracted or repelled, *not* by these beliefs, but by beliefs about certain *non-moral* features of the act or of its consequences?

(2) Supposing that there is a desire to do what is right as such, is it ever *sufficient* to determine one's actions, or does it always need to be supported by some non-moral motive, such as desire for praise or fear of punishment?

(3) Supposing that this desire exists and is sufficient to determine one's action *in the absence* of opposing motives, is it ever sufficient by itself to *overcome* opposing motives when they are present? Or must it in such cases always be reinforced by some non-moral motive?

(4) Supposing that Question 3 is answered in the affirmative, is there any sense, and if so what, in which we can say that the desire to do what is right as such *always could have* overcome *all* opposing motives, even when it did not in fact do so?

(5) Is it essential for the validity of moral judgments that Question 4 should be answered in the affirmative? And, if an affirmative answer be relevant to the validity of some but not all moral judgments, which are those to which it is relevant?

It will be seen that Questions 4 and 5 bring us to the problem of Free-Will *v.* Determinism and its bearing on morality.

As regards Question 1 it is important to notice and to avoid the following very common fallacy. Suppose it could be shown that what we take to be the desire to do what is right as such has developed, either in the history of each individual or in that of the human race, on regular principles out of desires which were all purely non-moral. (More or less plausible attempts to show this have been made, e.g., by certain psychoanalysts, on the one hand, and by certain sociologists, on the other.) It would be a fallacy to conclude that what we take to be the desire to do what is right as such is not what it appears to be, but is really just one or a combination of purely non-moral desires. An account of the stages out of which something developed in a regular way is one thing, and an analysis of it as it is when fully developed is another. But it is very common to confuse the two and to imagine that one has shown that the end-term of such a process just consists of the earlier terms in a disguised form.

This fallacy is often made plausible by the use of question-begging epithets for describing the earlier phases in such a process of development. Thus, e.g., some psycho-analysts describe an emotion which is supposed to occur in babies at the pre-moral stage by the name "feeling of *guilt*." Now the phrase "feeling of guilt," if taken literally, means an emotion which a person feels towards himself in respect of his belief that he has done something *morally wrong*. It is therefore quite meaningless to suggest that anyone who has not already got the notion of right and wrong can literally have a feeling of guilt. The phrase "feeling of guilt" must therefore be used in some unexplained metaphorical sense. But the use of it to describe the pre-moral stages illegitimately helps the suggestion that the end-term contains nothing that was not present in the earlier phases.

This brings us to the general notion of specifically moral emotion. By this I mean emotions which appear *prima facie* to be felt towards persons or actions in respect of certain *moral* characteristics which they are believed to have. Such emotions may be either reflexive or non-reflexive. The former are felt by a person towards himself or

his own actions, e.g. feelings of guilt, of remorse, of self-approval, etc. The latter are felt towards another person or his actions, e.g. feelings of moral approval or disapproval felt by one person for the acts of another.

The only remark that I wish to make here about them is that their apparent existence presents a considerable difficulty to any form of the Emotional Attitude analysis of moral judgments. According to such analyses to be right or to be wrong consists in being the object of moral approval or disapproval, as the case may be, to some person or class of persons. But, *prima facie*, an action becomes the object of a feeling of moral approval or disapproval to a person only in so far as he already believes it to be right or to be wrong, as the case may be. There is certainly the appearance of a vicious circle here, and it remains to be seen whether supporters of the Emotional Attitude type of analysis can show that this appearance of circularity is delusive.

Epistemological Questions

The last set of problems which I wish to mention can be stated as follows. How do we come to have ideas of specifically moral terms, such as *right*, *ought*, *morally good*, and so on? And how do we come to know or believe propositions connecting non-moral characteristics, such as truth-telling or promise-breaking, with moral characteristics, such as rightness or wrongness? These may be described as epistemological questions. It is plain that the answers to them will be closely bound up with the answers to the question how moral judgments should be analysed.

Suppose, e.g., that the Interjectional Analysis were correct. Then there are no moral judgments and therefore no moral predicates. The first question would then have to be transformed into the following. How do we come to make the mistake of thinking that we are ascribing to subjects predicates of a peculiar kind when in fact we are merely expressing certain emotions towards objects? The second question would have to be transformed somewhat as follows. Is it just an ultimate fact about human nature that most people tend to feel a certain kind of emotion when they contemplate, e.g., an act of promise-breaking; or is this explicable by general psychological principles and the particular influences to which most people are subjected in early childhood?

Suppose, next, that the Interjectional Analysis is false, but that it were true that moral concepts, such as *right* and *ought*, are definable in terms of certain kinds of pro-emotion and anti-emotion. Then the origin of such concepts would presumably be like that of our concepts of other psychological terms. We should feel these pro-emotions and anti-emotions on certain occasions, we should

introspect them and compare and contrast them with other experiences which we have and introspect, and then by a process of abstraction we should form the idea of their characteristic emotional quality. Then, finally, we should define "right" and "ought" in terms of emotions which have this quality. Moral concepts would in fact be empirical in origin.

Now, if this kind of analysis of moral judgments were correct, what we have called "right-tending" and "wrong-tending" characteristics would be those characteristics which tend to evoke pro-emotions or anti-emotions of a certain specific kind towards persons or actions which are believed to possess them. So the second question would reduce to the following. How do we come to know or to believe that such and such non-moral characteristics of persons or actions tend to evoke in those who believe them to be present such a pro-emotion or anti-emotion? Presumably the answer would be that we derive such beliefs by generalizing from our experience. We observe that a belief that an act has a certain non-moral characteristic, e.g., that it is an intentionally misleading answer to a question, is regularly accompanied by an anti-emotion of a specific kind towards the act in question. And we base upon this an inductive generalization. Such beliefs would in fact be empirical and inductive in origin.

Even if all forms of the Emotional Attitude Analysis were rejected and some form of the Objective Analysis were accepted, it would still be reasonable to hold that both moral concepts and moral judgments are of empirical origin, provided only that a *naturalistic* form of the Objective Analysis is adopted. But, if we feel obliged to accept a *non-naturalistic* theory of moral judgments and concepts, the case is altered.

Let us define an "empirical concept" as the concept of a characteristic which is either (*a*) manifested to us in sensation or introspection, or (*b*) is definable in terms of such characteristics together with the notions of Cause or Substance or both. (The concepts of sensible redness and of anger, e.g., come under the first heading; those of physical redness and irascibility, e.g., come under the second.) If we adopt this definition, it seems certain that the concepts of moral characteristics, such as *right, ought,* and *morally good,* cannot be empirical unless those characteristics are naturalistic. Therefore anyone who accepts a non-naturalistic account of moral characteristics is almost certainly committed to the proposition that moral concepts are non-empirical. Now many philosophers accept, either as self-evident or as a postulate, the principle that all concepts are empirical. If one is quite sure of this epistemological principle, one will have to reject the non-naturalistic account of moral characteristics, no matter how plausible it may seem on other grounds.

If one is quite sure of the non-naturalistic account of moral characteristics, one will have to reject this epistemological principle, no matter how self-evident it may seem or how useful it may be as a postulate. If, on the other hand, one is not quite sure of either, the conflict will tend to diminish one's confidence in both.

Again, it seems plain that, if *right* and *good* are non-naturalistic characteristics, the propositions connecting them with right-tending or good-tending non-moral characteristics, such as promise-keeping or tendency to promote happiness, must be *synthetic*. Now to many people it seems that such propositions as "Any act of promise-keeping tends as such to be right" are *necessary* and *self-evident* like the axioms of pure mathematics. But it is also a very widely accepted epistemological principle that there can be no synthetic necessary propositions. There are, according to this principle, synthetic propositions and there are necessary propositions; but the former are all contingent and empirical, and the latter are all analytic. Now a person who holds that moral characteristics are non-naturalistic seems committed to holding that such propositions as "Any act of promise-keeping tends as such to be right" are either (*a*) contingent empirical generalizations, or (*b*) synthetic necessary propositions. The former alternative conflicts with the *prima facie* appearance that these propositions are self-evident and necessary; the latter conflicts with the epistemological principle that all necessary propositions are analytic. Thus he must either reject the principle or try to show how it is that such propositions appear to be necessary and self-evident although they are in fact contingent and empirical.

I have now completed my account of what seem to me to be the main problems of Ethics. I have confined myself to stating alternatives and indicating the connexions and disconnexions between them. This is not very exciting, but I think it is a necessary preliminary to anything more positive.

EQUALITY AND EQUITY

D. DAICHES RAPHAEL, M.A., D.Phil.

I

In some sense every man has a moral right, or more properly a moral claim, to equality with other men. In what sense will, I hope, become apparent in the course of this paper. That there is such a claim in some sense is clear enough. "Equality before the law," for example, is something which we all recognize to be right.

It should also be clear that the moral right or claim to equality is not to be derived from considerations of utility. Although Bentham thought that all duties and rights became so purely because they increased happiness, he was obliged to add the principle "Everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one."[1] The pleasure principle alone would not enable us to decide between two actions, one of which gave to one man twice the amount of pleasure that the other gave to each of two men. The Utilitarians held that in choosing between these two actions a man must regard as his duty the second, the action which will produce happiness for a greater number of people, although the total amount of happiness produced by it is no greater than that produced by the first action which achieves the happiness for a lesser number of people. The Utilitarian principle according to J. S. Mill is to produce the greatest possible amount of happiness for the greatest possible number. This statement in fact contains two principles, not one. Mill is saying that we have two basic duties, first to produce the greatest possible amount of happiness we can, and secondly to distribute that happiness among as many people as we can. The second, it should be noted, is not merely an extension of the happiness principle, though Mill may have thought it was. It will not do to say that by spreading happiness more widely we increase it and "make a happier world." The hypothesis was that two actions were open to an agent, each of which would produce in total the *same* amount of happiness. If it were true that the spreading of happiness more widely always caused an increase in the total amount of happiness, then it would be un-

[1] "No school was in more deadly opposition to such *a priori* truths than the school of Bentham and the utilitarians. Yet, Bentham's famous doctrine, that, in calculating happiness each man is to count for one, and nobody for more than one, seems to be simply the old principle in a new disguise." Sir Leslie Stephen, address on "Social Equality" in *Social Rights and Duties*, Vol. I, p. 180.

necessary to add to the principle of maximizing happiness by saying that our duty is *also* to produce happiness for the greatest possible number. If the widest possible distribution of happiness necessarily increased the total amount of happiness, then the way to produce the greatest possible amount of happiness would include the spreading of happiness among the greatest number of people. Our basic duty would merely be to produce the greatest possible amount of happiness, and this would give the reason for the *derivative* duty of distributing happiness as widely as possible. Producing happiness for as many people as possible would be a *means* to the end of producing as much happiness as possible; it would not itself be part of the end. Most people would in fact not say that distributing happiness widely necessarily increases its total amount, and many might even feel that sometimes wider distribution diminishes the total amount of happiness so that a conflict arises between the duty of producing the greatest possible amount of happiness and the duty of producing happiness for the greatest possible number of people. "Everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one" is an addition to the utilitarian principle. It is justice (or rather, one element of justice) stealing back after Bentham has tried to explain it away in terms of the pleasure principle:

expellas furca tamen usque recurrit.

Nobody to count for more than one. In my duty to provide happiness for others I must, *prima facie*, distribute it equally to each man. Each man has a right to an equal share of the store of happiness which I have at my disposal.

II

To say that a person "has a right" may mean either of two things. First, the expression may mean that it is not wrong for the person to do or have that to which he is said to have a right to do or have. "I have a perfect right to wear brown shoes if I want to" means "It is not wrong for me to wear brown shoes," that is, "I am not under any obligation to refrain from wearing brown shoes." Conversely, "You have no right to whip that child" means, "It is wrong for you to whip that child," that is, "You *are* under an obligation to refrain from whipping the child."

Secondly, to say that a person has a right may mean that someone else has an obligation to him. "I have a right to the money you borrowed" means "You are under an obligation to give back to me the money you borrowed." "That child has a right not to be whipped" means that other people have an obligation to refrain from whipping the child. A right in this second and more frequent sense is a right *against* someone, it refers to a claim which someone is obliged to

fulfil. The person who is obliged to fulfil the claim may have other obligations, too, which conflict with this one. His duty is to carry out the strongest of the conflicting obligations, to satisfy the strongest claim. It will be convenient to reserve the name of "a right" to that claim which corresponds to the strongest obligation. If we use language in this way, a claim is correlative to an obligation[1] and a right correlative to a duty. Every man may have a claim against me for equal treatment, but the claim becomes a right only if it does not conflict with some stronger claim which I am also obliged to fulfil if I can. Thus my obligation to treat A equally with B may be outweighed by an additional obligation to B arising, for example, from a contract or from a special relation of guardianship. If, for instance, I owe B a debt, if I have made a promise to him, or if I have special responsibilities towards him because he is my child, then the total obligation which I have to B is greater than that which I have to A. In this paper I am not primarily concerned, however, with choosing between conflicting claims or with the circumstances in which the claim to equality becomes a right. What I wish to discuss is the *claim* to equality, the obligation or responsibility or "*prima facie* duty" to treat all men equally.

A claim may be a claim against a particular person or particular group of persons (as with a promise or a debt) or a claim against everyone (as with the claim of the child not to be hurt, or as with the claim to be told the truth). When we say that Jones has a claim to the money which Brown has promised him or has borrowed, we are referring to the same situation as we refer to when we say that Brown has an obligation to pay the money to Jones. A man's claim against everyone, as with the claim to be told the truth, is the other side of the obligation which everyone has to him, in this case to tell him the truth. Now these claims which a man has against everyone are general not only as obligations but also as claims. Not only has Jones a claim that everyone should tell him the truth (i.e. not only has everyone the obligation to tell the truth to Jones), but everyone has this claim (i.e. everyone is obliged to tell the truth to everyone). Thus there are certain claims, correlative to certain obligations, which every man has against every other man. The claim to equality is an example of such a general claim.

III

As soon as anyone maintains that there is a claim to equality, he is sure to be met by opponents who point to examples of countless situations in which it is obviously right to treat people *un*equally.

[1] I use the word "obligation" here to mean the same as Sir David Ross's expression "*prima facie* duty."

Few persons would say that a hard-working man ought to have no more money than an idler. "But still we know," says Maitland in his essay on "Liberty and Equality,"[1] "that there is a general argument against inequality . . . an argument admitted every time that our Court of Chancery says that equality is equity." This suggests that equality, in the sense in which there is a claim to it, is the same thing as equity. Professor John Laird, however, in his recent book *The Device of Government,* while agreeing that there is a claim to equity thinks that equity is a different thing from equality. "Most equalitarian arguments," he says, "are about equity rather than about equality, and seldom do much more than warn us against arbitrary, that is, against inequitable inequality."[2] Professor Laird seems to be saying that there is not really any claim to equality; what there is a claim to is a different thing, equity. The arguments usually put forward against inequality are really, he says, arguments against a particular kind of inequality, inequitable inequality. According to Professor Laird equitable inequality is right and inequitable inequality wrong. He thus distinguishes between equality and equity, while Maitland seemed to think that equality is the same as equity and therefore right or just. Sir Leslie Stephen evidently took the same view as Maitland when he said "The real force with which we have to reckon is the demand for justice and for equality as somehow implied by justice."[3]

All would agree that equity is somehow connected with justice. In ordinary speech we refer to equity as "fairness," and to say that something is unfair is either to say or to imply that it is unjust. We must now ask what is that equity or fairness, which Maitland and Sir Leslie Stephen thought was the same as equality and which Professor Laird thinks is different. Inequality is not equitable, says Professor Laird, if it is "arbitrary," but he does not tell us what constitutes arbitrariness. Sir Leslie Stephen also says that "the revolutionary demand for equality was, historically speaking, a protest against arbitrary inequality."[4] But preceding this remark he takes us a good deal further. "Justice," he says, "implies essentially indifference to irrelevant considerations, and therefore, in many cases, equality in the treatment of the persons concerned. A judge has to decide without reference to bribes, and not be biassed by the position of an accused person. In that sense he treats the men equally, but of course he does not give equal treatment to the criminal and innocent, to the rightful and wrongful claimant."[5]

The same notion of "relevance" is stressed in an interesting paper by Mr. G. L. Schwartz called "Planning and Economic Privilege"

[1] *Collected Papers,* Vol. I, p. 154. [2] P. 131.
[3] Address on "Social Equality," *op. cit.,* p. 177. [4] *Op. cit.,* p. 185.
[5] *Op. cit.,* p. 184.

and bearing the sub-title "The Notion of Equity in Economics."[1] Mr. Schwartz there enunciates and illustrates the dictum "Equality is never absolute, but may perhaps be defined as the absence of discrimination for reasons which are felt to be irrelevant." Now the definition offered is a negative definition and, it seems to me, presupposes that which it purports to define. "Discrimination" can only mean unequal treatment, so the definition tells us that equality is the absence of inequality that is based on irrelevant reasons, or in other words that equality is qualified equality, the qualification being inequality on relevant grounds. Mr. Schwartz cannot really mean that equality *is* qualified equality; his view must be that what people mean when they claim "equality" is "qualified equality," an equality which is qualified by inequality based on relevant grounds. And this must mean that there is a general claim to equality which is overridden in certain circumstances by reasons which are relevant to unequal treatment.

Now how do we know whether a reason adduced for unequal treatment is a relevant reason or not? Take, for example, the position of a civil servant administering some rule. He has to apply it equally to all and sundry, but he must be ready to give exceptional treatment to exceptional cases. The burden of a considerable proportion of Parliamentary Questions and other enquiries relating to the actions of Government Departments is to show that a particular case is exceptional and should not be bound by the ordinary rules. The rules must, it is agreed, be equally applied to all cases save those containing exceptional features which justify different treatment. But what is an exceptional feature justifying different treatment? If Tom Jones has an exceptionally long nose, can he therefore claim exceptionally large unemployment benefit? No, we are told, the unusual feature must be relevant to the issue. Again, the fact that Bill Brown is an exceptionally charming man may incline us to feel that we should like the request which he makes to be granted, but we cannot regard his exceptional charm as justifying exceptional treatment; that would be discrimination on grounds of purely personal bias. If Mrs. Smith, who is asking for an extra milk ration, brings a certificate from her doctor to say that owing to ill-health she needs more milk, that need is relevant to her request for exceptional treatment. The fact that she specially likes milk, although in one sense this is certainly *relevant* to her request for more milk, is not relevant in the sense of justifying exceptional treatment.

How then is such relevance to be determined? I suggest that the considerations which are "relevant" to a claim for inequality are *moral* considerations, they are special moral claims. Mrs. Smith's

[1] Published by the Manchester Statistical Society, 1944.

special need gives rise to a special moral claim. A person who is in unusual need has an unusual claim. A man who has been injured has a claim to my assistance. Again, special merit may give rise to a special claim. A man who has done some special public service, like risking his life in military service during a war, has a special claim on the gratitude of the community.

The fact that special claims conflict with and override the claim to equality does not of course imply that the claim to equality has no existence or no force in such circumstances. To think that it does is to confuse a claim with a right, and an obligation (in the sense explained on page 120) with a duty. As was pointed out earlier, *any* claim and its corresponding obligation may be outweighed in a particular situation by another and conflicting claim, and the strongest claim becomes a right which it is a duty to satisfy. But the claim which is overridden still exists as a claim. When Mr. Schwartz says "Equality is never absolute," he is merely saying of one claim what is true of all. No claim is absolute, that is, no claim has absolute stringency such that we can say *a priori* that it must override any conflicting claim, or any aggregate of conflicting claims, in any circumstances. The fact that the claim to equality may be overridden in particular circumstances by conflicting claims is just what we should expect. If everyone has a claim against me for equal treatment, and if one person has an *additional* (it must be additional since the claim to equality is universal) special claim against me because he is a member of my family or because he has earned my gratitude or for any other reason, then obviously his claims outweigh the single claims of others.

Unequal treatment, then, is justified when the general claim to equality is overridden by an additional special claim. Unequal treatment that is not based on a special moral claim is unjust. Now if there were no general claim to equality, as Professor Laird seems to think, unequal treatment that was not based on a special moral claim would not be wrong, it would be morally indifferent. In order to be morally *right* unequal treatment must be based on a special moral claim or obligation, but if there were no such claim the unequal treatment, while it would certainly not be morally right,[1] would not be morally wrong but would be morally neutral or indifferent. In fact we usually find that discrimination on "irrelevant" grounds, i.e. on grounds other than moral grounds, is not morally indifferent but is morally wrong. Consequently there must be a *prima facie* claim to equality to make unequal treatment, unless based on some additional moral claim, wrong.

[1] "Morally right" is used here in the sense of "obligatory." Sometimes the adjective "right" is used so as to mean "not wrong" and so to include both the morally right and the morally neutral.

IV

We have seen that Professor Laird is mistaken in thinking, as he apparently does, that there is no claim to equality. It may be objected, however, that all he intended was the view that there is no constant *right* to equality. We have already agreed that there is no constant right to equality or to any other of the things to which we have a claim. But if this is what Professor Laird meant, he must also have meant that there *is* a constant right to equity, that our claim to equitable treatment is always a right. This could only be the case if equity included *all* obligations, if in fact equitable action were synonymous with right action. To use "equity" and "equitable" in that way would obviously be unnatural and incorrect. The obligation to promote good is never thought of as an obligation required by equity or justice. Consider, again, the obligations of carrying out a promise, of paying a debt, of telling the truth, of providing special benefits for one's family or one's friends; we should indeed say that some of these obligations are a part of justice, but we should not say they are required by equity or fairness. When Professor Laird suggests that equitable inequality is right and inequitable inequality wrong, his view is incorrect whether he is referring to claims or to constant rights. If we are speaking of claims, there is a claim to equality unqualified by equity or anything else. If we are speaking of rights, there is no constant right to equity unqualified in any circumstances. The claim to equality may be qualified by the claims of equity, and similarly it, and the claims of equity, may be qualified by other obligations.

Nevertheless there is, as shown by the quotations on page 121 from Maitland and Sir Leslie Stephen as well as by the quotation from Professor Laird, some closer connection between equality and equity than between equality and the other things which may qualify it. To discover what this connection is let us consider those claims which qualify equality in the name of equity or fairness. Take, for instance, the policy of the present Government on the question of demobilization from the Forces. The principle of equality says "First in, first out." That principle is modified by the criterion of age because it is thought that military service and absence from home are a greater hardship for the old than for the young. "It is only fair," people say, to shorten the service of the older men. That is a concession, on grounds of equity or fairness, to the claim of hardship or need. Again, many people think that the Government's scheme should be modified so as to give some degree of preference to men who have served overseas. This[1] is a

[1] As usually stated, though it can be stated as a claim of special need. Opening the House of Commons Debate on the demobilization plan, Lt.-Col.

claim on grounds of desert or merit, and again it is thought to be fair or equitable to make such a modification. Although the Government have not included this modification in their scheme, they do not deny that it would be equitable to do so. What they say is that equity must give way to simplicity, to utility in fact, which shows that utility and equity have to compete as conflicting claims and that equity sometimes has to give way. With these proposed modifications of the strictly equalitarian scheme of "First in, first out" may be contrasted the modification of early release for building workers, the Class B of the official scheme. Nobody would say that it is *fair* to let out first the building workers who went in last. The reason for letting them out first is a utilitarian reason. They are to be released "in the national interest," that is, because of the benefit which they are expected to confer on the community. (It may be said that this also is a case of need. "The community needs them." All the same it is not a matter of equity. The relation of this claim of general need, as compared with the claim of individual need, to equality and equity will be considered later.)

I propose to examine the following types of case in which inequality of treatment seems to be called for, and which are often used as arguments against the existence of a claim to equality. They are (1) the claim of need or hardship, to which corresponds the principle of distribution "To everyone according to his needs," (2) the claim of desert, to which corresponds the principle "To everyone according to his merit," (3) the claim of natural capacity, to which corresponds the principle "To everyone according to his ability," and (4) the claim of public welfare, to which corresponds the Utilitarian principle of acting so as to maximize happiness. I have suggested that (1) and (2) are connected with equity, and that (4) is not (though we have to consider the relation of (4), looked at from the aspect of public need, to (1)). Many people would say that (3) is an equitable principle, and because of this and of the frequency with which (3) is used as an argument against equalitarianism, I think it, too, should be examined with the others. I do not propose to consider inequality of distribution based on other types of claim, such as the claim of a promise or a debt, or the claims of family and friends, because I think it is sufficiently clear by now what their relation is to the claim of equality and because it is also clear that they are not claims required by equity.

V

1. First let us take the example of special need. The grant of a

Profumo based the claim of those serving overseas on the special hardship involved in the prolonged and uninterrupted separation of father from children.

special allowance of petrol, at a time when petrol is scarce and must be rationed, can be justified by a special need for petrol. If I am a farmer dwelling in a remote district who cannot earn my living without having a car in which to travel to the market town, I may claim discriminatory treatment. But what I am really claiming is *equal* treatment. I am saying that unless special means are taken to provide me with a conveyance, I shall receive *less* good treatment than most people, who live where there are public transport services. My need would be equally well met by the provision of a public transport service in my district. So long as I am at a disadvantage as compared with most people, equity demands that I receive special treatment to remedy the disadvantage. But in doing so equity is not overriding equality. The claim of equity in these circumstances is a claim for equality, not for inequality. There appears to be inequality only because the means required in these circumstances to give me equal treatment with other people is *different* from that employed for the other people. I am not given greater advantages than they in the matter of benefiting from mechanical transport; the discrimination is an attempt to give me *equal* advantages, but because of my peculiar circumstances I have to receive those equal advantages by different methods from those used in towns. Townspeople are provided with public transport services, the institution of which in my district would be uneconomical, and therefore I am enabled to use a car of my own. Discrimination on grounds of special need is an attempt to achieve equality by what appears at first sight to be unequal treatment. It is an attempt to remove inequality arising from extraneous causes. The man who lives in the remote highlands is at a disadvantage, as compared with the townsman, in the matter of access to transport. The man who is disabled is at a disadvantage, as compared with the fit, in the matter of getting a job and living comfortably. The child who is mentally backward is at a disadvantage as compared with the mentally alert. Discrimination on grounds of special need is therefore not a limitation of equality but an attempt to help achieve it.[1] In so far as equity demands special allowance for special need, equity does not depart from equality.

2. The second type of special claim justifying discrimination which we proposed to examine is desert or merit. The man who has specially benefited the community deserves more than his neighbours in the communal distribution of happiness. It may be said that there is some connection with equality here also. The idea seems to be,

[1] This does not of course mean that the obligation to help the needy is derived from the principle of equity or that of equality. The point is that *discrimination* in favour of the needy is justified by equity, and justified as supporting equality not as opposing it.

in part at any rate, that equal services should be equally rewarded and unequal services unequally. In origin the special claim of desert may have arisen from the claim to equality. The underlying thought may have been that if a man has given benefit to others he should receive equal value in return to make up, as it were, for the loss that he has voluntarily incurred; and the man who has taken from others should suffer an equal loss in requital. The idea may have been to level up the inequalities caused by human actions, as the special allowances for special needs are attempts to level up the inequalities due to extraneous causes. However, this relation to equality does not now give desert its special moral claim. The man who has been disabled by fighting for his country is thought to have a double claim, the claim of need and the claim of merit, and so to have a stronger claim to special treatment than the man who has been disabled from birth.[1]

The difference may be illustrated by considering the claim of compensation, which is what we suggested may have given rise originally to the claim of desert. The man who has been injured by the negligent action of a motorist or an employer has a claim against the motorist or employer for compensation, which is supposed to be equal in value to the loss which he has sustained. His claim is to be requited to the extent of the loss. There is more than this in the case of merit. The disabled ex-serviceman is not thought of as *merely* having a claim of compensation against the community, for whose sake he suffered his disability. Gratitude for the benefit which he has given or intended by his sacrifice, and admiration for the voluntary nature of the sacrifice, are added. The *merit* is in fact constituted by the intention of conferring benefit and the voluntary readiness to suffer. The ex-serviceman who is not disabled has not so strong a claim as the ex-serviceman who is disabled, because he is not in special need, but he is still thought to have the special claim of merit for his readiness to suffer and for his having conferred, or having intended to confer, benefit on the community.

In the case of special need we saw that the apparent inequality of treatment that equity requires is in fact an attempt to produce equality, to make up for the inequality that is shown in unequal needs. The unequal treatment required for special desert, however, is a real deviation from equality. "To each according to his needs"

[1] This double claim of the disabled ex-serviceman caused a number of Members of Parliament, when the Disabled Persons (Employment) Bill was considered, to forget that other disabled men also have the special claim of need. The Minister of Labour, Mr. Bevin, resisted attempts to give priority of employment to disabled ex-servicemen only and insisted that all disabled men, from whatever cause their disability arose, should have the priority, though he agreed that if it were impossible to find work for all of them the disabled ex-serviceman would have the stronger claim.

is therefore a more equalitarian doctrine than "To each according to his merit." Ordinary moral consciousness requires the satisfaction of both claims.

3. Let us now consider the third example of special capacity. If the State provides University scholarships, it should not give them to all children but only to those who are capable of benefiting from a University education. But all children (save those few who are morons) are capable of benefiting from *some* kind of education, and therefore the State is regarded as having the obligation to provide all with some kind of education. The ideal that is pursued is to provide each child with that kind of education to which its natural abilities are suited. As the opponents of equality are quick to point out, men are by no means equal in their natural capacities, and the principle of distributing the opportunity for development in accordance with natural capacity appears to be a principle of inequality.

It should be noted that the essential part of the distribution in this case is not the distribution of means to present enjoyment but the distribution of opportunity, of potential means to enjoyment. In so far as everyone enjoys such exercise of his natural capacities as he is capable of making, the provision of education or training in accordance with capacity is a provision of present enjoyment. If a child who has no aptitude for mathematics but has an aptitude for craftsmanship is forced to go to a grammar school and learn mathematics, his actual education will be disagreeable to him. Apprentice him to an artisan who will teach him to exercise and develop his aptitude for craftsmanship, and he will enjoy his schooling. Education in accordance with capacity does, then, give present enjoyment in the exercise of natural abilities, and it is obviously the best way of distributing such enjoyment as equally as possible since it is to be presumed that one child enjoys the exercise of his particular bent as much as another enjoys the exercise of his. This would hardly be disputed. But the inequality comes in, it would be said, in the future enjoyment to which the education is a means. Since men differ in their capacities, development according to capacity must also be different for different people and so lead to different occupations or lives. Education in a grammar school is likely to lead to a non-manual occupation. Education in a technical school is likely to lead to the life of an artisan. Thus the distribution of opportunity to exercise and develop natural capacity in accordance with the kind of capacity one has, is an equal distribution of present enjoyment but a differentiated distribution of the means to future enjoyment.

I have said that the distribution of the means to future enjoyment, if based on natural capacity, in which men differ, is a differentiated distribution; I have not said it is an unequal distribution. Of course

men are not equal in their capacities, and therefore distribution according to capacity is, it would seem, unequal distribution. But what we do mean when we say men are unequal in their natural capacities? In order to say this we must look at particular capacities. Bill Brown has more brain power than Tom Smith, but Tom Smith may be physically stronger than Bill Brown. We say they are unequal and we imply that one has more than the other. But they are not unequal in natural capacity *simpliciter*. It would be nonsense, or at any rate highly misleading, to say that Brown has more natural capacity than Smith. We could say he has more capaci*ties* than Smith if Smith happened to lack one of the capacities that most men have, e.g. if Smith were blind or paralysed. When we say that Brown and Smith are unequal in capacity, we must specify what capacity we are talking about. Men certainly *differ* in capacity, but to say they are *unequal* in capacity is to speak in a vague and misleading way.

Of course people who speak of inequality of natural capacity are usually thinking of the inequality of earning power which different capacities bring. If a boy is born with more than average brains and is given a University education, he is likely to earn more money than his neighbour. But greater intellectual ability does not necessarily bring a larger income. A good craftsman may earn more than a teacher, and a champion boxer more than a scientist; then the greater earning power goes to the greater capacity for craftsmanship or physical strength, not to the keener intellect. In a society in which there were healthy conditions and decent education for all, there would still be few qualified to be scientists, but there would also be few whose capacities would be used to the full by employment as labourers or porters; and it would then be necessary to make labouring, especially in unpleasant work such as sewage disposal, sufficiently attractive to be taken up by offering for it a higher wage than would be offered for a more congenial job. The distribution of different kinds of education according to different capacities is not of itself an unequal distribution of the means to future enjoyment. The inequality arises from other factors in the economic system. A grammar school education for a boy who is better at mathematics than at handicrafts does not in itself provide him with greater opportunity for future means to happiness than does a technical school education or an industrial apprenticeship for a boy whose abilities lie in that direction. The inequality of opportunity arises because in our pre-war economic system a skilled worker in industry was paid less than a clerk. But if in future (as is not unlikely) a skilled worker in industry is paid as much as, or more than, a clerk, the inequality will no longer exist or will work the other way. At any rate the difference in the two types of education is not a case

of inequality, nor need it lead to inequality. The provision of educational opportunity according to type of ability provides differentiated but not unequal opportunity, and equality is not qualified by taking account of differences of ability.

We have found that in the distribution of opportunity for development of natural capacity, the present exercise of abilities called forth by the process of development should, so far as possible, give enjoyment and give it equally, while the future exercise of abilities which is made possible by the development should be differentiated (a qualitative, not a quantitative, distinction and so not involving inequality) according to the type of natural capacity. The actual differentiation, the qualitative distinction, is not required by equity but by a different ethical principle, the principle of beneficence.[1] To give someone opportunities to exercise and develop a capacity in which he is particularly apt is to give him happiness (since the exercise of the capacity is pleasant) and the means to happiness (since he will probably be able to earn his living by turning the developed capacity to use); to fail to give him those opportunities is to neglect the obligation of providing happiness which it was possible to provide; to make him try to develop capacities in which he has small potentiality is to make him do something which is painful in itself and which will lead to no beneficial, and probably to harmful, results since the training is going to be of no use to him and is likely to block the development of other capacities in which he has greater potentiality.

4. Let us consider, fourthly, whether the principle of equality is qualified by discrimination on grounds of public welfare. The State may subsidize scientific research and thus provide a group of research workers with a fair-sized salary. A taxpayer who is not one of the immediate beneficiaries of the subsidy might complain that this is discriminatory distribution of public funds. But the *reason* for the discriminatory distribution is not to benefit the scientists Jones and Robinson while neglecting the clerk Brown and the labourer Smith. The subsidy is provided in order that the discoveries of the scientists may help to advance the general prosperity of the country and so lead eventually to a higher standard of life for *all* its inhabitants.[2] It is designed to benefit all members of the community indiscriminately and so (as far as can be foreseen or provided for) equally.

[1] Some would say that the principle involved is a moral claim to self-development and not the obligation of beneficence. At any rate it is not the principle of equity.

[2] The State does not subsidize scientific research for its own sake. Those who value knowledge for its own sake may provide money for pursuing this end, but subsidies from the public purse have a utilitarian purpose, to benefit the public.

Nevertheless, although the ultimate purpose is non-discrimination, the immediate effect is discrimination. The moral principle which justifies this departure from equality of distribution is not equity. Nobody says that it is *fair* to give subsidies to scientists. Equity requires that the eventual greater prosperity which is expected to be obtained should, when available, be equally distributed to all the members of the community, but does not require the making of efforts to obtain extra wealth to be distributed. Equity relates only to the *method of distributing* goods which are actually available for distribution. The obligation to seek to obtain or produce further goods for distribution is one enjoined by the general obligation of beneficence.

We can now return to the suggestion made earlier that discrimination on grounds of public benefit may also be regarded as made on grounds of need. If the particular public benefit which is sought is one which will not simply add to positive happiness but will remove or reduce existing unhappiness, or is one which is felt to be essential before life can be called decently happy, we say it is a public need. Early release from the Forces of building operatives is said to be a public need because of the evils of overcrowded and insanitary accommodation: early release from the Forces of schoolteachers is also regarded by many people as a public need because they feel that better education for their children is indispensable to civilized life. The claim of need in such circumstances, however, is not a special claim of particular individuals but a general claim of all or nearly all. The distinction between particular claims of individuals and general claims which everybody has was explained earlier. The general obligation (i.e. the obligation incumbent on each and every man) to maximize the happiness of others and minimize their unhappiness has as its correlative a general claim. This general obligation and its correlative claim are what the Utilitarians were after in their pleasure principle (though they failed to see that the obligation is not to produce happiness as such but to produce it for other people). The combination of this general obligation with the general obligation to distribute equally the happiness available for distribution gives us the Utilitarian system of ethics. By restricting their ethics to these two principles, however, the Utilitarians were guilty of over-simplification including insufficient attention to the particular or special obligations which may modify the application of general obligations.

VI

We have considered four types of case in which there appeared to be rightful inequality in the distribution of benefit. We found that

in the first, discrimination on grounds of special need, the apparent inequality of distribution was really an attempt to achieve equality or at any rate less inequality; that in the second, discrimination on grounds of special desert, there was real inequality; that in the third, provision of opportunity for development according to capacity, there was not in fact unequal distribution but differentiated distribution; and that in the fourth type of case, discrimination on grounds of public welfare, there was unequal distribution of existing goods with the aim of distributing equally the goods which it was hoped to produce in the future as a consequence of the present distribution. We found that it was equity which made the distribution in the first two types of case right, but that it was not equity or justice but the separate obligation of beneficence which was responsible for the rightness of the initial distribution in the third and fourth types of case. Equity requires inequality of initial distribution (*a*) to meet special need, in order to achieve real equality, and (*b*) to meet special desert.

Apart from the case of desert, therefore, equity requires equality. In all other cases where equity appears to qualify equality, it is in fact ensuring that the execution of the principle of equality shall not be a wooden execution that defeats its own object. Utilitarians would say that discrimination on grounds of desert is for the sake of future good and so not demanded by equity but by the obligation of beneficence. I do not myself think that the Utilitarian analysis of the claim of desert is correct. It seems to me that the claim of desert is a part of justice or equity, and that in this one type of case equity qualifies equality. That the principle of equality is a part of equity and not a separate principle is, I think, obvious not merely from the fact that the claim of equity to justify discrimination in favour of special need is a claim for equality, but also because discrimination (i.e. divergence from equality) which is not based on moral grounds is thought of not simply as wrong but as *unfair*; if the special case of desert is subtracted, fairness means equality.

Our conclusion, then, is that equity includes the claim of equality and the claim of desert. It is in fact the same as distributive justice. Maitland was wrong in suggesting that equality is the same as equity, but it is the larger part of equity. Professor Laird was wrong in suggesting that equity and equality are opposed, for equity includes equality. Sir Leslie Stephen was right in saying that equality is implied by justice, for equality forms part of distributive justice.

THE NEUROLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF PERCEPTION[1]

W. RUSSELL BRAIN, D.M. Oxford, F.R.C.P. London

I MUCH appreciate the honour of being invited to deliver the first Manson lecture, which, its founder has laid down, is to be devoted to the consideration of some subject of common interest to philosophy and medicine. I cannot think of anything which better fulfils that condition than the neurological approach to the problem of perception. The neurologist holds the bridge between body and mind. Every day he meets with examples of disordered perception and he learns from observing the effects of lesions produced by disease, or by the physiologist's experiments, something of how the neural basis of perception is organized. It is possible to study perception as though this was largely irrelevant. How far that view is right will be for you to judge when I have finished.

It is one of the problems of modern culture that, as the field of knowledge expands and the study of each small portion of it becomes more intensive and detailed, it becomes impossible for one man not only to cover the whole field but even to understand the essentials of any but a very small area. A complete discussion of perception, for example, must deal with physics, including atomic physics, the psychophysiology of the senses, comprising not only normal psychology and physiology but also clinical neurology, and, finally, philosophy. Here are four highly specialized fields of knowledge. It may be possible for a man to have expert knowledge of two, though even this is exceptional; most of us must be satisfied if we can with difficulty keep abreast with one. So science flourishes, but no one is capable of creating a synthesis or discovering relationships between the facts discovered by the various specialists: indeed the very facts themselves are often unknown to the philosophers. What then is to be done? Can the specialist become his own philosopher. He is often, I fear, an unsatisfactory one, and his philosophical discoveries are apt to turn out to be respectable but time-worn doctrines. Nevertheless the scientific specialist-turned-philosopher can at least act as a liaison officer between his specialty and philosophy. He can bring to the notice of the philosopher facts which seem to him significant, and say to him: "I may well be wrong in my interpretation of these—let me hear what you think." It is in

[1] The first Manson Lecture delivered at the British Institute of Philosophy, University Hall, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1, December 14, 1945.

that spirit that I venture to talk about the neurological approach to the problem of perception. Epistemology seems to me to be the cardinal problem of modern thought, for we cannot separate our conclusions concerning the nature of perceiving from our conclusions as to the nature of what we perceive. As a neurologist I shall be chiefly concerned with the causal aspect of perception. I make no apology for that, for it is much neglected by philosophers, who mostly concentrate upon perception as presentational immediacy. No theory of perception can be adequate which does not fully account for both, and this lecture is an attempt to contribute to their correlation.

Physiological Idealism

In so far as neurologists base any theory of knowledge upon their observations they seem usually to adopt physiological idealism. The neurologist observes the brains of animals and of other people. From the behaviour of both and from the answers which patients give to his questions he discovers that when an object is perceived a series of events occurs successively in time, beginning with an event in the object and ending with an event in the subject's brain. If the series is interrupted at any point between the object and the cerebral cortex (brain surface) of the subject, the object is not perceived. If the relevant area of the cortex is destroyed, the object again is not perceived. But, if the relevant area of the cortex is electrically stimulated while the subject is conscious, sense-data of a kind aroused by an object are perceived by the subject. Thus it is held that the event immediately preceding, or perhaps synchronous with, the perception of the object is an event of a physico-chemical kind in the subject's cerebral cortex. The cortical neurones are normally excited in the way just described from the external world, but if they should exceptionally be excited in some other way, e.g. by electrical stimulation or by an epileptic discharge, the appropriate sense-data would still be experienced. The only independently necessary condition for the awareness of sense-data, to use Broad's term,[1] is thus an event in the cerebral cortex. This might be true and yet the awareness of sense-data might still be compatible with the possession by sense-data of some status in the world external to the subject's brain. But the neurologist goes on to argue that this cannot be so for reasons which are important enough to deserve detailed consideration, whether or not his conclusion from them is right.

Let us examine the account which the neurophysiologist gives of the causation of sense-data. I shall take my first illustration from hearing because the physics of sound is easier to understand than

[1] Broad, C. D. (1927), *Scientific Thought*, p. 501.

that of light. A tuning-fork is struck or a whistle is blown or in some other way the air is made to vibrate, and a series of waves with a frequency of, let us say, 4,000 vibrations a second is propagated through the air. It strikes the observer's ear and a portion of the cochlea, attuned to this particular frequency, is caused to vibrate at the same rate. So far the subject has heard nothing. The vibration of this part of the cochlea starts a series of nerve-impulses in a certain fibre or fibres of the auditory nerve. No nerve-fibre in the body can carry impulses at so fast a rate. The frequency with which nerve-impulses can follow one another along a nerve depends upon the electro-chemical structure of nervous tissue and is never more than 1,500 a second, and often much less. We learn this by recording electrically the response of nerves to their appropriate stimuli. The auditory nerve-fibre therefore conducts impulses at its accustomed rate, and, by a series of relay paths, the impulses reach the auditory area of the cerebral cortex in the temporal lobe. Electro-encephalography enables us to detect its arrival there and in the experimental animal we can record simultaneously the frequency of the sound-stimulus and the electrical response which it evokes in the auditory cortex. These are entirely dissimilar. Frequencies of stimulus ranging from 100 to 16,000 vibrations a second evoke the same kind of electrical response from the auditory cortex, namely a single deflection lasting from 1/20 to 1/15 second. But the auditory stimuli of different frequencies excite different nerve fibres conveying impulses to different areas of the cortex. In the dog the cortical foci responsive to high frequencies are located in front and those for low frequencies behind, and successive octaves are arranged at equal intervals along the cortex (Tunturi).[1] Similar observations have been made on the cat (Woolsey and Walzl)[2] and since they depend upon certain properties of nervous tissue and structure there is no reason to think that man is essentially different. Now the difference in pitch of two sounds is correlated with a difference in their frequencies, but no such difference is to be found in the events in the nervous system upon which the discrimination of their respective sense-data depends. These have neither the frequencies of the stimuli nor do they differ from each other in frequency. They differ only in that the nervous impulses travel by different paths and reach different destinations in the cerebral cortex; and this seems to be true not only of the difference between one sound and another, but also of that between the nervous impulses evoked by auditory, visual and olfactory stimuli. As Adrian[3] says: "The quality of the sensation seems to depend on the path which the impulses must travel, for

[1] Tunturi, A. R., *Amer. J. Physiol.*, 1944, pp. 141, 397.
[2] Woolsey, C. M. and Walzl, E. M., *Amer. J. Physiol.*, 1941, pp. 133, 498.
[3] Adrian, E. D., *The Basis of Sensation*, London, 1928.

apart from this there is little to distinguish the messages from different receptors."

Thus, according to neurophysiology, the observer is like a deaf housemaid who sits in her kitchen and watches the indicators of the electric bells. There are different bell-pushes (receptors) outside the front door and the back door and in the various rooms, but similar currents travel along similar wires and the only difference she can detect is that different indicators move. Being paralysed as well as deaf she never answers the bell except by pressing another one!

The facts of neurophysiology are held to mean that sense-data are "really" located either in the cerebral cortex or in the mind of the observer. It is then necessary to enquire why a coloured patch which is "really" in my brain or in my mind appears to be outside me on a table in the room. The physiological idealist replies by invoking a process which he calls "projection." The colour is "really" in my brain but I "project" it in some way on to the table.

For various reasons it is difficult to believe that such a process occurs. Some of the objections have often been pointed out. The physiological idealist, it has been well said, is an idealist in respect of other people's sense-data and a realist in respect of his own. For, if all sense-data are states of his brain, this must also be true of the sense-data derived from his own body; and his brain itself, if, as is not impossible, he could see it in a mirror in the course of an operation, must be reduced to an activity of itself. No doubt he will try and save the situation by maintaining that his sense-data give him information concerning objects which exist independently of his awareness of them. But it is difficult to see how he could ever arrive at that conclusion if his sense-data were nothing but states of his own brain. How does the deaf and paralysed housemaid, who was born in the kitchen and has never been outside it, know that the electric bell indicators give her information as to what is happening at the front door or the back door? How does she know that anything exists outside the kitchen? These are well-known philosophical objections to physiological idealism. There is one difficulty, however, which neurophysiology itself raises.

Let us suppose that we are watching an observer looking at a circle. There is a sense-datum or a group of sense-data which are circular. Light waves, which in their grouping maintain a circular relationship, travel from the object to the eyes of the observer. On a circular area on each of his two retinae disturbances are set up which excite nervous impulses which travel through his optic nerves, tracts and radiations to the visual areas of the cerebral cortex. Only when the nervous impulses reach the cortex does the observer see the circle. If physiological idealism is true we might expect to find that there is something circular about the events at the cerebral

cortex, for it is these, we are told, which are "projected" on to the outside world when we perceive a circle. Nothing of the sort is true. The area of cortical excitation which exists when we perceive a circle is divided into two halves, one in each cerebral hemisphere. Pathways connecting them exist, but these appear to play no part in our perception of the two halves of a circle as one whole, for this still occurs when the connecting pathway (the corpus callosum) is divided.[1] Neither half is semicircular; it is roughly the shape of ⊐, the closed end lying in front and the open end behind. The right half of the circle is represented in the left cerebral hemisphere and *vice versa*, and the lower quadrant is represented above the upper. There is another complication. We saw that a circular nervous disturbance occurred in each retina; thus each half of the circle has a double representation in the nervous system, and, though the pathways for the two corresponding halves, i.e. the two right halves and the two left halves, come to be close together behind the optic chiasma and are represented in the same area of the cerebral cortex, there is no anatomical point at which they fuse. Sherrington[2] demonstrated this in his experiments with flicker. Finally, since the two halves of the circle are represented in cortical areas lying parallel to each other, the cortical disturbance is three-dimensional.

Thus when we perceive a two-dimensional circle we do so by means of an activity in the brain which is halved, reduplicated, transposed, inverted, distorted and three-dimensional. If physiological idealism is to be really physiological it must admit that its theory of projection breaks down because the circle which is said to be projected from the cerebral cortex never existed there at all.

Realism

Now let us turn to a consideration of some alternative theories—those which have in common the belief that sense-data in some way exist independently of our awareness of them, and compose or help to compose objects, and that thus our perception of objects involves and depends upon our discovery or selection of sense-data and not our creation of them. This view seems to me to encounter difficulties as formidable as those which confront physiological idealism. Let us consider some of them.

However little interest realist philosophers may take in the causal aspects of perception, they all seem to accept the view that it must be, at any rate theoretically, possible to give a causal account of

[1] Akelaitis, A. J., *Arch. Neurol. Psychiat.*, 1941, pp. 45, 288.

[2] Sherrington, C. S., *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System*, London, 1906, p. 354 *et seq.*

perception which shall relate events occurring in the object to events in the brain of the observer and finally to events in his consciousness. Thus when I perceive a brown patch there are wave-lengths of a given frequency, nervous impulses and so on, even though it may be difficult or impossible to say how this series of events is related to awareness of a brown sense-datum. Now between one colour and another, between brown and green, black and white, there are differences of quality by which we distinguish them, there is also something in common, colouredness, which enables us to group them together. But suppose instead of a brown patch we consider a black patch. What are the wave-length and frequency of black light? Of course there are none. Black is a sense-datum of the same kind as brown or even white: in fact they shade into one another so that it may be impossible to say where one ends and the other begins—but no causal account can be given of our perception of black in terms of excitations proceeding from the object. Indeed, the perception of black depends upon the absence of such visual excitations. It also depends upon the integrity of the visual part of the cerebral cortex. Seeing black is not the same as not seeing white or any other colour. If one half of the visual cortex is destroyed so that the subject fails to see half of his visual field it does not appear black to him. He merely fails to see it, and may even be unaware that it is lost. I hope a realist philosopher will give us an account of the ontological status of a black sense-datum when it is not being perceived, and, in particular, its relationship to its non-existent substratum in the physical world. I suspect that it will prove to belong to the family of sense-data comprising that famous non-existent black cat in the dark room. And if a black sense-datum is to be regarded as in some way generated or created by the brain or the mind, what reason have we for thinking that this is not equally true of a brown or blue sense-datum, for it would seem that external excitation does not necessarily determine the quality of a sense-datum. Indeed our experience of dreams should have taught us that, for we experience visual sense-data when asleep in a dark room.

This brings me to another class of sense-data which need have no external excitation, namely, hallucinations. Realist philosophers treat these as "wild" sense-data. Price[1] referring to pink rats says: "Three things are indubitably real: the sensing, the sense-datum, and the act of perceptual consciousness. Only one thing is not real—the material thing which is the object of his perceptual consciousness." But the only conditions either dependently or independently necessary for the perception of hallucinations are states of the subject's body. I cannot discover any evidence for the view that the

[1] Price, H. H., *Perception*, London, 1932, p. 147.

pink rats exist unperceived as wild sense-data, and that perceiving them is a process of catching them in the trap of consciousness. It is a relief to know that Price thinks that the wild sense-data may be "fleeting entities," but, if so, how do they come into existence apart from the process which leads to their being perceived?

Let us turn now to another kind of hallucination—the phantom limb. It is well known that a person who has lost a limb may continue to experience the feeling that it is there, and this is called a "phantom limb." It is perhaps less well known that it is not necessary for the limb to be amputated in order that a phantom limb may be experienced. Interruption of the sensory pathways at various levels of the nervous system may have the same result. Then the patient may *see* his limb in one position and *feel* as if he has another in another position. Let us consider the simpler case of the amputated limb. The limb is felt to be where in fact it is not: it may even be felt to be in a part of space occupied by another solid object. "Wild" sense-data, in the realist view, do in fact exist at that spot, but these cannot be caused by events occurring where they are experienced in the phantom limb: they must be generated in some other part of the body. They possess, however, qualitative and spatial characteristics indistinguishable from those which are caused by events occurring where they are experienced. What reason, then, have we for thinking that the qualitative and spatial characteristics of sense-data related to a limb which is really there are not similarly generated elsewhere, for example, in the brain or the mind of the observer?

The Role of the Body in Perception

The part played by the body in our perception of the external world is of the greatest importance and is much neglected by realist philosophers. Whitehead[1] alone among living philosophers seems to me to give due weight to it. Let us begin by considering a relatively simple experience. I am holding a stone in my hand and I perceive that it feels smooth, hard, cold and of a certain shape. Realism maintains that in doing so I am aware of sense-data simultaneously and successively, and that these sense-data belong to the object and exist either as actual or obtainable sense-data independently of my perceiving them. Now Price[2] has observed what he calls "a curious point" about touch. "All normal tactual sense-data," he says, "belong to two objects at once, viz. to the object which we are touching, and to our own body or some part of it." I should prefer to say that tactile sense-data may belong to either. Suppose that I

[1] See *Process and Reality*, Cambridge, 1929, pp. 89, 104–5, 167–8, 178.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 229.

stroke someone's skin with a fine wisp of cotton-wool and ask what he feels. He may reply "a tickling sensation" or "a piece of wool." In the first case he is describing a sense-datum in his skin, in the second he is referring it to an object. But it may be said in the second case he is merely inferring that the sense-datum in his skin has been caused by an object with which previous experience has made him familiar. But take another example. When my hand has been exposed to cold air I say "my hand is cold," but when I grasp a stone I say "this stone is cold." In each case what I am experiencing is a cold sense-datum, but in the one case I feel it in my hand and in the other case as belonging to an object. How do I perceive the size, shape and solidity of the stone? The touch and pressure sense-data which contact with the object evokes in my fingers are localized and distinguished as relating to different parts of the skin. Furthermore my fingers themselves will be bent or straightened and separated to a greater or less extent; and each successive movement and posture of any finger arouses sense-data from the tendons and joints. If you move your fingers when your eyes are closed you are aware of these sense-data as originating in and referring to your fingers; but if you are holding an object in your hand these sense-data become fused with those just described and are felt as collectively conveying awareness of the size, shape and solidity of the object. Thus all the sense-data which are said to belong to an object when it is handled can in suitable conditions be experienced as belonging to the body.

But the body is present in our perceptions in a more elusive and less perceptible fashion. The realist usually starts from awareness of sense-data. Thus Price[1] says that when we see a tomato "something is red and round then and there I cannot doubt." It is then assumed that we can go on to consider this red and round something as an entity independent of its then-and-thereness. Most philosophers, I suppose, would maintain that the red patch is or is composed of sense-data and that its thereness is not. But how do I arrive at the awareness that the red patch is "there." Because the images which it throws on any two retinae are slightly different, because the accommodation of my eyes is contracted or relaxed, because the axes of my eyes are at a certain angle and certain ocular muscles are contracted or relaxed. All these states of my body cause nervous impulses to reach my brain. They, however, would tell me little if I did not also receive impulses from my labyrinths, which vary according to the position of my head in space, and from the muscles and joints of my neck, which indicate the position of my head in relation to my body. In other words, the spatial setting of the red patch is derived from my body; and the proof of this is that when this bodily machinery goes wrong I no longer see the red patch

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 3.

"there." I see two red patches, or the red patch goes round and round, or though I see it I simply do not know where it is, and cannot find my way to it. Hence my awareness of the red patch depends to a surprising extent upon nervous impulses from my body, some of which remain unconscious, though others give rise to recognizable somatic sense-data. We can *consider* the red patch as an isolated sense-datum but we cannot experience it so, and, in so far as we consider it so, our consideration is remote from experience. The total experience of "a red patch there" contains subjective somatic sense-data inextricably intermingled with it.

In an attack of migraine the patient experiences visual hallucinations of scintillating lights seen to one or other side. These are caused by a disturbance at the visual cortex on one side. Let such a patient during the attack lie with closed eyes in a dark room. If now he turns his eyes to the right the hallucinatory figure appears to move to the right and similarly in any other direction. Thus, nervous impulses from the eye muscles evoked by the movement of the eyes determine where a hallucination originating at the visual cortex shall be seen.

There is another example which beautifully illustrates how perception and causal investigation may aid each other. If I am in a completely dark room with my eyes closed I see a black expanse which seems to be very near me if not actually behind my eyelids. If now I open my eyes, the black expanse appears to be outside me at some distance. Where I perceive the black sense-datum therefore depends upon nervous impulses from the muscles which open and close my eyes, since nothing else has changed.

Electro-encephalography shows (Adrian)[1] that, when the eyes are closed, there is a steady electrical rhythm detectable over the visual cortex. This is abolished by opening the eyes and looking at something, but it is also abolished by opening the eyes in a completely dark room. Opening the eyes thus causes an electrical change in the visual cortex contemporary with the spatial change perceived in the black sense-datum, though, be it noted, there is no change in anything outside the body.

There are other objections to realism which seem to me serious, but I will mention only one. Astronomical distances are so great that light takes many years to travel to us from distant stars. The star which I now see may have ceased to exist since it sent out the light rays which are striking my retina. In what sense, other than a causal one, can my sense-datum be said to belong to a non-existent star? This is an extreme but not a special instance, for the same is true of all perception. All physical impulses upon which perception depends take time to reach us from all objects. The speed of light

[1] Adrian, E. D., *Trans. Ophth. Soc. United Kingdom*, 1943, pp. 63, 196.

is so great relative to terrestrial distances that we can usually neglect it, but the fact remains that I can never see anything but the immediate past of any object I look at.[1] Sound travels slowly in relation to the speed of modern aeroplanes; hence this discrepancy becomes of practical importance. The aeroplane which I hear in one place has now moved to another. I am hearing its past. This is true even of bodily sensation, since a nervous impulse takes a measurable time to travel from the sense organ to the brain. I can feel only the immediate past of any part of my own body except the brain. Sense-data, then, are part of my present, but how can they form part of physical objects of whose present I can know nothing and which may even have ceased to exist?

Awareness of Externality

Thus I must confess that I find both physiological idealism, as ordinarily stated, and the varieties of critical realism equally unsatisfactory. I must now briefly and with much diffidence try to indicate at least the lines along which it seems to me we should seek for a method of reconciling the data of presentational immediacy with the data which science provides concerning perception in its causal aspects.

Externality is the cardinal problem. X sees a tomato on the table. Something happens in X's brain and he sees a red patch outside him. How are these two statements related? I say "two statements" and not "two events" because I do not think there are two events. At the reflex level, organisms show adaptations to space without awareness of it. Many reflexes have a spatial character. If a harmful stimulus is applied to the hind foot of the spinal frog, though it cannot be felt, the foot is reflexly withdrawn out of harm's way. The righting reflexes orientate the organism in relation to gravity. Involuntary blinking in response to an object approaching the eye is a reflex which is evoked by spatial changes outside the body. All the proprioceptive and postural reflexes are responses to spatial factors and modify the position of the body or its segments in space.

In our awareness of our own bodies we are directly aware of a three-dimensional object.[2] The position of this object can be changed

[1] Relativity theory defines as contemporaneous those events which cannot be causally related to each other. Conversely, causally related events cannot be contemporanoeus.

[2] Awareness of the body has been held to give rise to a body schema or image. However convenient in practice, these terms are easily interpreted as implying a dualism which I think is epistemologically objectionable. The most important literature on awareness of the body consists of a paper by Head, H. and Holmes, G. *Studies in Neurology*, 1920, Vol. 2, 605, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, by Paul Schilder, London, 1935, the same

in relation to the external world and the position of its parts can be modified in relation to the body as a whole. Thus the body serves as a primary model of three-dimensional space.

The body surface provides examples of externality. To discriminate between different parts of the surface of the body is to recognize that they possess the relationship of mutual externality. If I clasp one hand with the other I am aware of each hand as external to the other. I am both subject and object, and I am directly aware of the spatial position of both.

The discrimination of different parts of the body's surface depends upon the fact that each is separately represented on the surface of the brain. Thus the same relationship of externality exists between the two areas of the body surface and the two areas of brain surface. The same is true of two areas of the retina and two areas of the visual cortex.

Now suppose that instead of clasping one hand with the other I am looking at my hand. An image is formed on my retinae and an area in my visual cortex is excited. I move my fingers. There is a simultaneous change in two cortical areas—the visual cortex and the area in which are represented the surface and posture of my hand as felt. Both movements are related to my body image as a whole. I knew where my fingers were to start with, and I know where they are now that I have moved them. The awareness which is the conscious representation of what is happening at my visual cortex, in other words, the visual image of my hand, is located at that point in my body image where my hand is felt to be.

Now let us suppose that I hold a tomato in my hand. In addition to the position of my hand in my body image I am now conscious of tactile and postural sense-data, described above, as evoked by the tomato in my hand, and in addition to the visual image of my hand there are now the visual sense-data associated with the tomato. Both tactually and visually the tomato is *in* my hand, the position of which is already related to my body image. And if I now put the tomato on the table, I bring my hand into a new position on the table and leave the tomato there; and its visual sense-data now occupy a position which is related to my body by being known as having just been occupied by my hand. Without attempting to define how much of space-perception we owe to innate dispositions and how much to experience we can say that this is the essence of the genesis of awareness of externality, first through the sense of touch and then through vision; and one has only to watch a baby a few months old exploring its own body and manipulating and

author's *Mind: Perception and Thought in their Constructive Aspects*, New York, 1942, *L'Image de Notre Corps*, by Jean Lhermitte, Paris, 1939, and some recent work is discussed in my paper in *Brain*, 1941, Vol. 64, 244.

dropping objects to see the process at work. Though, so far as I know, no philosopher has ever mentioned it, "dropableness" is the primary quality which distinguishes a small object from a part of one's body.

But this simple outline requires to be filled in with some details. When I bend my head to look at my hand I excite my vestibular apparatus and the nerves of my neck; I converge and accommodate my eyes; and nervous impulses, conscious or unconscious, pour in to contribute to the modifications of my body image.

Time plays an important part in our awareness of space. When I bend my elbow I am aware not only of the movement but of the time taken to effect it. This factor becomes much more important when the whole body moves. Then time is implicit in space, for time is taken to traverse a distance; and the changing bodily and environmental sense-data experienced in the course of the journey are felt to be successive. Thus there is a sense in which even in perception what we are aware of is space-time, from which space is an abstraction.

Spatial relations as primarily perceived are thus somatocentric. The final task of space-perception is the recognition of an absolute three-dimensional space by the creation of invariants, as Pötzl[1] puts it, so that the identity of visual objects is maintained independently of the relation-system in which they are at the moment arranged.

The Neurological Distinction Between Primary and Secondary Qualities

Thus when we study perception in its causal mode we find that the nervous system is extremely well adapted for the representation of relationships existing in the physical world, including the mutual externality of objects, among which is the body. Furthermore, mutual externality and spatial multiplicity are different ways of describing the same relationship. The whole of science is built up upon the exact correspondence between the multiplicity of objects in the physical world and the excitation of multiple areas of the cerebral cortex. But what consciousness is aware of is never simply the anatomical relationships of cortical areas: it is the relationship subsisting in the external world, which is presented to consciousness by the dynamic interplay of a highly complex integration of impulses from different sense-organs, some excited from without the body and some from within.

But, though the body is well adapted to the task of spatial discrimination, temporal succession sets it a different and much more difficult problem. Nervous tissue possesses peculiar features: in

[1] Pötzl, O., *Die Aphasialehre vom Standpunkte der Klinischen Psychiatrie Bd. 1. Die optisch-agnostischen Störungen.* Leipzig, 1928.

particular, a peripheral nerve cannot conduct continuously but only by means of a succession of impulses, the frequency and rate of conduction of which vary within narrow limits, and differ little from one form of sensation to another. Thus there appears to be nothing in the conduction of nervous impulses to correspond to the great differences between light, sound and touch regarded as physical stimuli, and, as we have seen, this is one of the main arguments of the physiological idealist in favour of the view that sense-data must be quite different from anything in the external world.

There would seem to be at least three possible explanations of the relationship between sense-data and the nervous system. (1) A sense-datum is a neural event or a field of neural events qualitatively unlike the physical stimulus which initiates it. (2) A sense-datum is a psychical event unlike the neural stimulus which initiates it and thus doubly removed from the original physical stimulus. (3) A sense-datum is a neural event which is conducted from the surface of the body to the surface of the brain, but which carries with it some characteristics of the physical stimulus which excited it. There is a fourth alternative—that the relationship is inconceivable by the human mind.

Any of the three explanations involves some strange ideas. Even the simplest, namely that when we are aware of a sense-datum we are aware of neural events at the surface of the brain, implies, first, that colours, sounds and smells are electro-chemical states of a fatty substance, and, secondly, that the great qualitative differences between them correspond to differences between units of this fatty substance which appear to be and to behave very much alike. I believe that the third alternative is the most probable and perhaps slightly the least strange. Let me try and state it more fully.

Every sensory nerve has its receptor organ, which is stimulated by, and hence attuned to, its particular stimulus. A constant stimulus, suddenly initiated, sets up, as Adrian[1] has shown, a continuous though diminishing excitatory state at the nerve-ending, which excites a series of discontinuous impulses in the nerve. Finally there occurs a sense-datum which is continuous but diminishes in intensity. In order that a physical stimulus may arouse a sense-datum it must have a certain minimum duration. Neurophysiology, in giving an account of the phenomena of the sensory impulse, describes these in its own way as a succession of spatial states: but this is to neglect the essential feature of living matter. The process of awareness of a sense-datum begins at the receptor organ with a four-dimensional event—the receptor organ experiencing a physical stimulus for a minimum duration. Since there is as yet no awareness, I shall borrow Whitehead's term "prehension" and say that at the level of the

[1] Adrian, E. D., *The Basis of Sensation*, London, 1928, p. 119.

receptor there is a prehension of the successiveness of a physical stimulus into a four-dimensional multiplicity-in-unity. Thence onwards in the nervous system I suggest that we are dealing with the conduction of such prehensions, which no three-dimensional account can adequately describe. When they reach the cerebral cortex, where they are integrated with other impulses, we are aware of sense-data. Thus, broadly speaking, primary qualities correspond to those relations between sense-data which are spatially discriminated by means of the cerebral cortex as an area extended in space, and secondary qualities are those sense-data which are prehended through the capacity of nervous tissue to create a new kind of four-dimensional unity out of successiveness.

Conclusions

To sum up, I find perceptual awareness so impregnated with somatic sense-data, that even the perceptual distinction between my body and external objects does not correspond to a distinction between somatic and non-somatic sense-data. But I believe that many relations which exist between sense-data are identical with those which exist between physical objects, and that even secondary qualities are not generated by our brains or minds, but that in sensing them we are perceiving the four-dimensional "texture" of the external world. Naturally, however, this appears very different when we describe it scientifically as successive three-dimensional states. I cannot discover any meaning in the statement that sense-data, even hallucinatory sense-data, are not where they appear to be. But any description of the relation between sense-data and objects must take account of the fact that perceptual awareness, though reproducing both relations and sensory "samples" of the physical world, is never contemporaneous with the events it portrays. We are always anything from a fraction of a second to a few thousand years behind the times.

ON POETIC TRUTH[1]

H. D. LEWIS, M.A., B.Litt.

Reason has moons, but moons not hers
  Lie mirror'd on her sea,
Confounding her astronomers,
  But, O! delighting me.
—Ralph Hodgson.

Poetry has to do with reality in its most individual aspect. It is thus at the opposite pole to science, and out of its reach. Studies like *The Road to Xanadu*,[2] highly valuable though they may be in one way, do not help us in any measure to understand what poetry in itself is; nor do they heighten substantially our appreciation of poetry. This may seem rather obvious, but it is not in fact idle to say it. For our thought is apt to be unduly coloured to-day by the progress of science, and some of the votaries of science are prone to regard it, in the Biblical phrase, as 'profitable unto all things.' These are less naïve to-day than their prototypes a century ago, and they have a subtler psychology at their disposal when they turn to art. But their view is no less pernicious for that reason. Science has very certain limits, and we only bring it into contempt by forcing upon it a forlorn and unnatural enterprise beyond its own terrain. Some scientists, and they include eminent persons like Julian Huxley, have made that mistake in regard to our ideas of right and wrong, and have endeavoured to develop a science of ethics. It is not to the purpose here to expose the confusions involved in this particular act of aggression on the part of science.[3] Science has nothing to do, in the final analysis, with our ideas of right and wrong. And it is also true, quite apart from ultimate questions about the meaning of value, that we cannot give a scientific analysis of art. Science may indeed help us to understand matters incidental to the pursuit of artistic activities. Harmonics will tell us a great deal that bears upon music, the chemist can instruct us in useful ways about paints, the psychologist can tell us much that is of interest about the mental processes and states of the artist and his audience, but the essential thing which is music or painting can never be taught or described in

[1] A lecture delivered to the Poetry Society at University College, Bangor.

[2] A detailed study of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" in terms of the poet's experience and reading.—J. Livingstone Lawes.

[3] The matter is very fully discussed by C. D. Broad in *Mind*, October 1944, pp. 344–357.

this way. In its essentials every art is as far removed from discursive thinking, and as far out of the reach of analysis and rules, as it is possible for any experience of self-conscious subjects to be.

This is because art has to do with reality as individual and concrete. That is not all that we can say about it. An isolated fact, a unit or atom, cut loose from the universe, has no significance for the scientist, the philosopher, or the poet. It derives its significance from the reality to which it belongs. But this may present itself to u in more ways than one. One way is that of the scientist. The table before me will have little significance for any of us if we simply stare at it. Indeed, I could not be aware of it as a table if I did not do a great deal besides looking at the colour. To see things in their true perspective, for example, we require to draw very extensively upon experiences that are past. All that we see and hear is given a meaning in this way and becomes a coherent world in which we can act with intelligence and foresight although the actual elements of which it is made, taken in separation from one another, would leave us with a chaos rather than a world of things which we understand and control. It is the function of science to complete this interpretation of facts, both for the sake of completer knowledge in and for itself and to enhance the control we have to exercise over our environment. The scientist can tell me much about the table which I cannot know from ordinary observation. But however exhaustive information of this kind may be there is something which it does not cover, and that is the particularity of this table here and now in this room. The table cannot be reduced, as has sometimes been supposed, into a collection of universal qualities. There is something 'given,' a matter of fact, particulars, irreducible data with which explanation ends. This is apt to disconcert us because it sets so definite a limit to the strictly rational operations of the intellect. And some have succumbed to the temptation of representing the reality of various things in terms of their relation to other things and the rules which determine these relations, reducing an object to what we know about it and can describe. One celebrated thinker in the last century, namely T. H. Green, regarded the universe as a 'system of all-inclusive relations.' But this will not really do. The particular, the given, refuses to be conjured away. It remains a stubborn, disconcerting factor of experience.

This is not the only reason for the limitations of science. For the nearer we get to *living* realities the harder it is to attain scientific precision. An organism seems to respond as a whole and thereby reacts on its environment in a way which cannot be described by mechanistic rules. Its own nature enters more completely into the events of its own life, and this self-determination, the taking up of our environment into ourselves, is very extensive in the experience of self-

conscious or thinking beings. This is one reason why there cannot strictly speaking be a science of society, and why it is misleading to describe psychology as a mental science. But the point that has most importance for our purpose is that there is in reality, whether we think of it as animate or inanimate, human or sub-human, an aspect of individuality at which every form of rational explanation stops short.

II

What has this to do with poetry? I shall come to that shortly. I want first to take note of one thinker, in some respects the greatest there has been, who took a very bold course with this problem of the individual. He was Plato. For Plato the only reality that mattered is exemplified best for us in the principles of mathematics. The aim of our lives should be to draw ourselves away as much as possible from the unsubstantial fluctuating facts of the world about us, and establish some communion with the abiding or 'eternal' objects which are apprehended by thought and not sense. This was the source of Plato's asceticism. We must so discipline our material appetites that the soul may disentangle itself from the world of the senses and rise, in his own notable comparison,[1] like the god Glaucus out of the sea, into the realm of limpid unresisting abstractions, unresisting in the sense that the mind can master them and master completely, understand without remainder. This is not a venture in which we can ever be wholly successful, not only in the present world where we can never shuffle off our mortal coil, but under any conditions. For the grip by which abstract conceptions cohere and by which our thought is enabled to pass from one truth to the other, as in a system of geometry, presupposes some principle which cannot be itself explained in that way, and whose nature can only be discerned by a noesis, a glimpse or intuition. But this supreme vision is a vision of some condition of abstract principles,[2] and it comes as the culmination of a long and arduous struggle to break our association with the world of the senses and accustom ourselves to abstract thought, the 'silent communion of the soul with itself.' In that rarefied atmosphere, we come to our own, we encounter what is most 'familiar' in the sense that it is akin to our own minds, and we are thus no longer at the mercy of the alien unmanageable facts which enslave and bewilder the majority of men. This striking, if, as it may also appear when presented without equivocation, rather extravagant view, has many features which cannot be properly exhibited in a brief

[1] *Republic*, 611.

[2] It makes little difference here that they are also thought of as entities or things.

reference; its ramifications in the spheres of politics, education and religion, are very extensive. But it must suffice here to note the dismissal of the individual and particular facts of experience as of no importance in themselves. At best they can serve as counters or diagrams by which we direct our thought about the objects of the discursive intelligence, much as the triangle we draw on paper helps us to discover and explain geometrical truths about the triangle 'in itself.' This was carried by Plato to the point of disregarding the observations by which scientific hypotheses are substantiated in various fields; and thus, although he can be quoted for the view that leaders of society require an extensive training in science, this has to be understood in a highly specialized sense which would hardly win the approval of the scientist to-day. For, while the latter may, as in the case of Adams and Leverrier, 'calculate a planet into existence,' the calculation is the result of careful observation. Whitehead is the thinker of to-day who holds a position most nearly resembling that of Plato, and I do not think that calculation will quite yield the results he expects, however important it may be as a factor in scientific procedure. An astronomer would not get very far with the counsel that Plato gives him in the following passage:

"These ornaments of the heavens, since they adorn a visible sky, should be thought to be the most beautiful and to have the most perfect nature amongst visible things, but to fall far short of those true adornments, those movements wherewith pure velocity and pure retardation, in true number and in all true figures, are moved in relation to each other, and wherewith they also move that which is within them, which matters are to be apprehended by reason and understanding, but not by sight. . . . Then we must use the adornments of heaven as models in our study. . . . But in respect to the relations of night and day, of days and months, and months and years, and of the other stars to sun and moon and to each other, do you not think that he (the philosopher) will regard with astonishment the man who considers that these objects, bodily and visible as they are, are ever invariable and never decline from their courses, and will think it absurd to make enormous efforts to apprehend the truth of these matters? . . . Astronomy, then, like geometry, we shall pursue by the help of problems, and leave the starry heavens alone; if we hope truly to apprehend it, and turn the natural intelligence of the soul from uselessness to use."[1]

[1] *Republic* 529, Lindsay's translation, Everyman Edition, p. 255. The student who is introduced to the *Republic* mainly through Nettleship's *Lectures on the Republic of Plato*—a work that is little likely to lose its value for the purpose—is apt to be misled at this point. For Nettleship represents Plato as merely insisting on the need for an "interpretation of sense" (p. 276).

This shows very clearly the extent to which Plato was prepared to go in dispensing with any observation of facts. While the scientist to-day is concerned with particular facts or 'specimens' only in so far as they exhibit or confirm his general rule, the rule can only be established by its conformity with facts. This is largely what the scientist has in mind when he prides himself on thinking realistically. But Plato would describe himself as a realist in a very different sense, namely in the sense that it is by breaking away from the world of facts that we make genuine contact with reality.

The bearing of this on our problem will begin to unfold itself if we note next the sweeping condemnation of the arts, and of poetry in particular, which we find in the dialogues of Plato. For this is not some wholly mysterious aberration of a man of genius, a cultural blind spot not capable of explanation in a normal way. It is sustained and deliberate, an integral part of the thinking of one whose ideas were never allowed to settle in stagnant pools. There are no compartments in Plato's philosophy; on the contrary his thought was unified to a fault. Neither could we ascribe his view of the arts to aesthetic insensibility. That is the least plausible of all suggestions. For the literary excellence of Plato himself is as notable as his power of thought. He was born into a civilization that accorded to the poet a pride of place in education and culture. Homer and Hesiod were especially revered, they were the scriptures, the holy writ, by which the character and outlook of the young Athenian were shaped. They were taught with a remarkable thoroughness which does not seem to have detracted at all from the enjoyment they continued to afford, an achievement which would repay closer attention, I am sure, by the educationist to-day, for its secret, if it can be discovered,[1] will take him a long way towards the solution of what may well be regarded as the greatest intrinsic problem in education. And Plato, being favoured by fortune in his circumstances as in his natural endowment, had the full benefit of this training. He knew the poets of Greece, and their spell is unmis-

On this view all that Plato wishes to deny is that "we ever get at the truth of astronomy by simply looking" (page 272). But this is only one of many cases where exponents of Plato have endeavoured to make his view more acceptable by representing him as exaggerating for effect. If we blur the dualism of Plato we miss his intention entirely and fail to appreciate the precise nature, and the importance for Plato, of logical considerations upon which his view was based quite as much as upon the analysis of perception. The more we study the movement of Plato's thought as a whole the more evident also will be the completer rationalism of his final views. Nettleship, as is usual with 'idealist' expounders of great philosophers, is somewhat prone to interpret Plato in the light of his own idealism.

[1] We have to remember, of course, that there was little else for the Greek to be educated upon.

takably upon him in all his writings. Ridicule does not prevail against it; it is more subtle than the 'slyness' of Socrates, and makes itself evident in the very tone and temper of the passages most critical of art, to say nothing of the apt and discriminating quotations in which the dialogues abound. The artistry of Plato himself will be equally evident to the most cursory reader. In range of literary power alone his peers are not many. The skilful opening, capturing attention while it lightly touches on the matters that set the main course of the dialogue, the play of light and shade, the delineation of a character by a few deft strokes, the apt word and the trenchant sentence, the memorable simile and the sheer triumph of imaginative writing in myth and allegory, this, and much else, and, above all perhaps, the impression that is always conveyed of a master who is never overborne himself by his art, this reveals that fullness of literary genius by which the very structure of literature itself is fashioned. No praise seems too extravagant for Plato the literary artist, and yet it is he who would expurgate Homer out of recognition, who would forbid all music except the very simplest notes on the lyre and pipe, who instructs aspiring young men to cast aside poetry and painting, with other childish things, on reaching maturity, who rates the poet well below the statesman and the soldier[1] and not very far from the usurper and tyrant enslaved by his own thoughts and passions as well as by his bodyguard. It is he, at the close of his *Republic*, who adds the final touch to the ideal city which he has built with such cunning and care by firmly, all the more firmly because also a little wistfully, turning the poets away as ones with no part whatever in drawing the 'pattern that is laid up in heaven.'

"Let it, then, be our defence now that we have recurred to the subject of poetry, that it was only to be expected that we should expel poetry from the city, such being her nature. The argument compelled us. And let us tell her also, in case she should accuse us of brutality and boorishness, that there is an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry. Phrases like 'the bitch that at her master yelps,' 'the yelping hound that in assemblies of the fools exalts its head,' 'the conquering rabble of the over-wise,' the statement that 'the men of subtle thought are beggars all,' and many others are signs of this ancient antagonism. . . . We are conscious of the charm she exercises upon us. Only to betray the truth as it appears to us is impious. . . . As men who have loved but have come to the conclusion that their love is unprofitable, though it may cost a struggle yet turn away; so likewise, though by reason of the love for such poetry that out nurture in beautiful constitutions has bred in us we shall be glad of any manifestation of her goodness and truth, yet until she is able to defend herself, we will not listen to her without repeating to

[1] *Phaedrus* 248.

ourselves as a charm this argument of ours and this incantation, for fear of falling again into that childish love which is still shared by the many."[1]

So the poets leave. Was there ever a problem that could perplex more the student of literature, has the paradox a rival in the history of great thinking? I doubt it, and I doubt even more whether there is any more instructive.

III

Instructive? Now why? Let us first dispose of some fairly incidental matters to which undue weight has often been attached. Firstly, as I have said, the Greeks took their poets very seriously, and not altogether with the right kind of seriousness. The poet was, for them, inspired, not in the sense we would nowadays give to the term, but more in the sense in which devout persons used to believe in the literal inspiration of the Bible. God spoke in the words of the poets as he spoke to the Hebrew by the mouth of his prophets. And this has obvious dangers, for it carries with it a conviction of very immediate, if not of literal, infallibility, an attitude that could not fail to be confusing, and sometimes also ludicrous and mischievous in practice. And this was undoubtedly happening in a real and serious measure in Greece. Plato was aware of the danger. He also understood well the moral and political dangers that lurked in the excessive excitability of the Greek temperament. There are many passages in the dialogues which represent the poet as the purveyor of excitement, as one who was made to pander to a licentious and enervating emotionalism. And when we remember this we may be tempted to conclude, as many have in fact done,[2] that Plato was opposing, in somewhat extravagant and misleading fashion, not poetry in itself but a particular misguided view of the function of poetry. That will not, I think, really hold. When we have made the fullest allowances for the circumstances in which he wrote, including the deliberate use of poetry for mystification by the sophists, the condemnation of poetry in the *Republic* and other dialogues remains

[1] *Republic* 607–608, Everyman Edition, page 353.

[2] Among the most interesting and scholarly attempts to substantiate this view is that of R. G. Collingwood ("Plato's Philosophy of Art," *Mind*, April 1925). He does not ascribe to Plato "the puritanical moralist's objection to art as such" (p. 169). The purpose of Plato, according to Collingwood, is to show, on the one hand, "that art is not knowledge" and "cannot be praised for its truth," but that, on the other, it is "symbolic of philosophical truth" (p. 163). Plato, it is urged, is in this way bringing out the true function of art. And that is where I cannot accept Collingwood's view. For while it is contended in the present paper (see below, Section IV.) that art does express truth symbolically, what it does symbolize, on our view, is an aspect of reality

far too consistent and direct to be a kind of inverted defence of poetry, or a case of exaggerating for effect. This matter would take long to debate thoroughly, and many pens have, in fact, been kept busy upon it, but I have little doubt that Plato really and consistently considered poetry and all other forms of fine art to be debasing and mischievous, an excuse for shallow sensibility, the nostalgic indulgence of an effete and unhealthy mind. And this attitude is, I think, integral to the philosophy of Plato, his genius compelled him to carry his point unswervingly to a conclusion so little respectable (much less so, for example, to the Greek than the communism of wives and property) that a lesser mind would certainly have cast about for a means to avoid it. It was the penalty of genius to pay the price of a principle without remission. I suspect it cost Plato more than we think. In that case the deeper are we in his debt; we learn so much more from him because he could not prevaricate.

What do we learn? Just this; that poetry has to do with reality in that concrete and individual aspect of it which the mind can never tackle altogether on its own terms, with matter that is foreign and alien in a way in which abstract systems, ideas in which we detect an inherent pattern, a structure that belongs to the ideas themselves, can never be. It is never familiar to us in the way in which Plato wished the conquests of the mind to be familiar. On the contrary its function, the salve which it brings to mankind, the need which it meets and which has to be met in some way in every age that is not to become decadent or barbarous is precisely this contact with reality as it impinges upon us from outside, the sense that we can touch and feel a solid reality which does not wholly dissolve itself into

other than that which can be comprehended intellectually. (Is not this the only kind of symbolism that has importance?) On the view that is, rightly I believe, ascribed to Plato by Collingwood, art would have only very low value. It would do imperfectly what is done better by the strictly intellectual operations of mind. And this, as I take it, is just what Plato does say. Art is a propaedeutic to knowledge; and it is to be encouraged only within the strictest limits and dispensed with on reaching intellectual maturity. One finds it hard to see how this could yield the conclusion that Collingwood expects of it, namely that the quarrel between philosophy and poetry is that of "rivals for the supreme allegiance of mankind" (p. 170). It may be true that Plato "felt within himself a real conflict between the claims of his literary genius and those of his philosophical" (p. 170), but that is not how he himself understood the incompatibility of art and philosophy. The quarrel originates precisely where art makes a claim, quite preposterous on Plato's view of it, to be a serious rival to philosophy for our allegiance, and hinders the work of philosophy. The very tone of the relevant passages in the *Republic* fully bears this out, and I am sure we cannot get a true view of Plato's thought as a whole unless we take his condemnation of poetry and the arts quite seriously.

The student who wishes to pursue this matter closely will find a valuable guide to the relevant passages of Plato's Dialogues in "Plato and the Poets," G. A. Hight, *Mind*, 1922.

the conceptions of our own minds. It is the individual and particular that does this. And the wonder and mystery of art, as indeed of religion in the last resort, is the revelation of something 'wholly other' by which the inexpressible loneliness of thinking is broken and enriched. To know facts as facts in the ordinary way has, indeed, no particular power or worth. But a quickening of our awareness of the irrevocability by which a thing is what it is, has such power, and it is, I believe, the very soul of art. Whatever the device adopted its purpose is to make us see things as we have never seen them before, see the familiar for the first time; and thus there are no exclusively poetical or artistic subjects, anything may be a proper subject for a poem or a painting or a song. This has often been urged, but rarely, I fear, for the real reason; at best it is usually a vague empirical generalization. But the real reason is just this, that any device which makes us see any kind of object, in the material or mental sphere, with a sense of wonder that it should be this and not that, is an artistic achievement.[1] This is why we use the word creation. All things are made new in art, they are made for the first time, they count for their own sake instead of being pointers by which we move about in our own orbit. This may refer to a specific object that we know or to an imaginary one. The choice is at bottom immaterial. What matters is that the sense of some otherness in reality should be stirred. But this is obviously easier when our attention is turned to the unfamiliar, to events in a remote past, to fairyland and eldorado. It is the same awareness that we have when there is a sudden fall of soft snow. There is a feeling of wonder, an inexpressible delight in being alive when we first turn out into the new snow. The sense of the unfamiliar is not, I believe, all that we can say about beauty in nature or in art. To that I shall turn again in a moment. But it is essential. The light in a picture must be the 'light that never was on land or sea,' for it must make us see what we could not normally see, not necessarily, or indeed usually, by superimposing something on the ordinary scene, but by making us aware of the familiar as we are not normally aware. There must be a miracle. Whereas we were blind we now see, and the miracle is greatest although not always in its ultimate consequence the most sublime, when it evokes this new awareness in an ordinary context—so much so as almost to frighten us.

But no fact is a bare fact, no individual is a universe in itself, and just as it is the function of the scientist to exhibit to us the abstract rational connection of things, the necessities which our mind can follow and understand, so the artist exhibits affinities in

[1] I believe that this is what Gerard Manley Hopkins really means by 'inscape' notwithstanding the Platonism that colours his account of it. For an excellent discussion of the 'topic' see *Gerard Manley Hopkins*—John Pick.

the *actual* structure of objects by which their significance is deepened and enhanced. All facts have 'ragged edges,' as one great man put it. They are torn out of some context, and these contexts are not wholly those which science or philosophy supplies. There is a possibility of seeing things, even the humdrum and trivial, in a way that goes surety for the supreme worth of the whole from which they derive, and there are relations of things, harmonies, in which this worth of the whole articulates itself with greater completeness. But we have to be careful here, for we must not lose sight of the fact that every individual reality is potentially poetry. How this is related to the harmonies to which a completer significance belongs is not easy to determine, although I am certain that there is such a relation. Neither is it possible to add much about the fuller significance which belongs to some artistic contexts,[1] and which makes it proper to speak of suitable poetic themes provided we are careful to identify such themes with a special kind of context and not with any kind of fact as we ordinarily know it. Even if it promised to be fruitful, and I doubt it, we could not embark on this further inquiry in the space at our disposal. What I desire to stress is that there is a unity rooted in the individuality of objects and discovered in a different way from the apprehension of rational connections.[2] The 'idealist' philosophers in the last century provided a good way of denoting this when they spoke of a 'concrete universal,' but they failed to do the fullest justice to this important conception, for they continued to think of the unity concerned as a rational one, and capable, in principle, of being understood through and through. They did not relate it sufficiently to the awareness we have of a reality impinging upon us, although some who were of that 'idealist' persuasion had the awareness of this character of reality in no small measure.

IV

To reveal this otherness of reality and the context in which it matters most is the function of the artist. The result is not achieved in any way resembling the deliberate procedures of science. For the artist is dealing with matter that he never subdues. There are no directions to be given, no rules or formulae by which his real work can be done. Some study of technique is, indeed, possible. We can distinguish the different forms of art, and within an art such as poetry distinguish one mode from the other. This is also normally

[1] The general question of the objectivity of value does not come within the scope of this paper.

[2] If I understand aright this is what Berdyaev means when he urges that "Unity in reality does not resemble unity in thought" (*Slavery and Freedom*, p. 75).

helpful to the poet, especially by making him familiar with certain forms or media upon which his genius may exercise itself. But knowledge of this kind will never take him very far, or ensure for the reader much appreciation of poetry. We may know all *about* poetry and miss its essence. It is much more important that the poet should familiarize himself with what has been finely achieved in art, concerning himself with such factual matters as are required to know the media for what they are. But the trick must work or, if you like, the miracle must be accomplished, in a way that cannot be described or anticipated, and it sometimes happens where there is very little technical equipment or analytical knowledge of technique. The artist hits on the right symbol, some way of arranging colours or sounds or words in a way that makes the real nature of the world break upon our mind. And this is what we mean when we say that art is essentially symbolic. It does not describe or analyse, and it has no method in the strict sense. Method only concerns the incidentals of it, some exhibition of conditions in which the miracle usually happens. But the conditions are never exhaustive, they will never give us the result themselves. We must walk in ways that are haunted by beauty, and we may be lucky, but it is luck, or, if a more dignified term be preferred, grace. Vision is vouchsafed to us, and while we can say, within some limits, when it may happen, we cannot say why. A certain kind of diligence will help, in particular, as was remarked, the continuous attention to what has been finely achieved in art. We must continue to look at pictures or to read poems, until we see with ever finer perception how excellent they are. But why they should be so we can never say, the most that we can describe, as distinct from just having the awareness of beauty, is certain regularities that are really incidental to artistic awareness itself. What can be described or explained is not art.

This is why an artist who sets out to compose with a very clear notion of what his achievement is to be and how it can be accomplished, whose heart is not constantly a-flutter with the fear of failure, stands little chance of success. A true poet or a novelist may indeed know much about the incidentals of the course he proposes to follow, but unless there is ample room for him to take himself by surprise the prospects are bleak. What his art will be really and truly as art he cannot know until it is accomplished. In some rare matters it may even be accomplished before he turns to the technicalities, but that will only be in a very specialized sense. The technicalities in that case will be the equivalent of the treatment a craftsman may give to a work of art, making the materials serve more completely the purpose which the artist has already indicated with precision. In any sense in which it is a part of the artistic achievement the material has to be chosen and formed with renewed

artistic insight at every stage. That is why the experience of artists is often unutterably tragic. For 'tasks in hours of insight willed' cannot here be 'in hours of gloom fulfilled.' And this is but to say again that the artist is not to be saved by 'works,' even by that very special kind of artistic perseverance, namely living in the atmosphere of great art, which is usually helpful. In all essentials it is *sola gratia*—as in religion if the matter be properly understood, which is very rare among theologians. And the mistake which many men of genius have made is to seek to direct and canalize their art in a way that is wholly incompatible with its continued spontaneity. The artist can only succeed so long as he continues to be hitting on novelties which quicken an awareness of some otherness in reality that we cannot express in the ordinary conventions of language, that cannot, indeed, be expressed at all in the usual sense, but only suggested.

An obvious form which suggestion of this kind takes is direct comparison, in the simile, or image. What we see is seen more vividly in relation to something else, something like it but also different. Consider a line from one of the much maligned Georgian poets:

"And when the downy twilight droops her wing."[1]

The comparison deepens the impression of a slowly enfolding darkness which the poet is anxious to convey. Personification has a similar effect. These are fairly obvious examples of a procedure which in all its forms consists in drawing some kind of comparison, exhibiting affinities by which objects become vivid for us and acquire a significance which cannot be reduced to rational terms.

The moral of this view for the artist himself has already been drawn. He goes sadly astray if his artistic activities are made to conform to some purpose or rule independently conceived. The temptation to rationalize art in this way is greatest in literature, where, as in the case of didactic poems, principles that are deemed to have much importance in themselves, especially in the sphere of morals or politics or religion are thought to acquire a further lustre by having an artistic form imposed upon them. But that, in fact, is precisely what we cannot accomplish. An idea has no importance for the artist as such outside his work of art. It does not bring any capital of its own to invest in an artistic undertaking. The soundness or impressiveness of the ideas expressed in a poem, are irrelevant to its merit. But that is not, perhaps, the best way of putting the matter. The truth is that the rough distinction we make for some purposes between form and content in art is apt to be more misleading than helpful.[2] The unity of artistic creation precludes any separation of

[1] *Brumana,* James Elroy Flecker.

[2] It is also very misleading to identify the form with the sounds of the words alone. Artistic relations of sounds that do not depend in any measure

its elements. What the poet has to say, in other words, is not what he seems to say on the surface, not the meaning we might give to his work if we considered it as philosophy or science. It is the expression of this meaning in a special way, a fusion of form and matter suggesting something which could not be put in any other way. This constitutes the truth of a poem, poetry is in this sense invariably veridical; 'Truth is beauty and beauty is truth'; where we have a work of art it is a revelation of reality. But this gives no grounds for concluding that a poem expresses ideas which are independently true. That is not its purpose. And when poets have been so false to their genius as to endeavour to be philosophers and poets at the same time they have invariably failed, as they were bound to do.[1] The poet works by a discernment of his own, not by deliberate analysis and synthesis. When he borrows philosophical ideas, and there have been some instances of a successful appropriation of this kind, these ideas are important for the poem only in so far as they have been transmuted by the poet's art and become elements in a whole that expresses symbolically something quite other than the ideas themselves. This happens very rarely, for close adherence to the unity of the philosophical principle or system predetermines the course of the poem too rigidly to allow sufficient spontaneity for the evolving of an independent artistic pattern. Dante seems to have succeeded, even to the extent of presenting an argument in poetry. But it is not the argument in itself that matters in such poems; neither its lucidity in itself nor the importance of the conclusion established by it, are of the slightest account. It has value in the poem only as indissolubly a part of a whole whose value is quite independent of formal or theoretical truth. As Eliot very properly observes, the fact that Dante has behind him the 'exact intellectual system' of Aquinas for which, we may record, Eliot has a special regard, does not make Dante a greater poet than Shakespeare or "mean that we can learn more from Dante than Shakespeare."[2] The most that we can say, and I believe Eliot ought to emphasize this more, is that the artistic sensi-

on overt meaning are music and not poetry. There is some early poetry which has no syntactical form that we can recognize to-day. If it has no such form it must come very near being music rather than poetry. In some poetry, on the other hand, overt meaning plays much the most important part. Browning provides an obvious example, but it has to be stressed again that Browning succeeds as a poet, not because of the truth or impressiveness of his thoughts in themselves, but because—to draw a distinction that must not be pressed too closely—he is doing with thoughts what Tennyson does with words. Whether there can be poetry of thought alone, a bringing together of thoughts that stirs the peculiar awareness which is art independently of the sounds of words is an interesting but extremely difficult question.

[1] The supreme example in recent times is Bridges in the *Testament of Beauty*.

[2] "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," *Elizabethan Essays*, p. 47.

bility of Dante is all the more remarkable in view of his dealing successfully with material so full of inducement to him to turn from his proper business.

V

The long course of literary activity is strewn with the wreckages of artists lured to their doom by the siren songs of intellectual truth. But this is not the only moral of our view.

Let it be clear, firstly, that it is not the poets themselves that stand in most need of our warning. We must ourselves be sure that we allow the poet to be about his own business. Consider the lines:

> From too much love of living
> From hope and fear set free,
> We thank with brief thanksgiving
> Whatever gods there be,
> That no life lives for ever,
> That dead men rise up never,
> That even the weariest river
> Winds somewhere safe to sea.

This is from Swinburne's *The Garden of Proserpine*, a poem in which Swinburne appears to good advantage. Swinburne is a little out of fashion at the moment, but I have no doubt that he will recover his position, if not in the first rank of English poets, then only a little below it. But most of us would be little inclined to endorse the view that these lines appear to express. Similarly the poem *Hymn to Proserpine* with the sub-title *Vicisti Galilæe*, a remarkable poem little known nowadays, I fear, for anything other than its titles and a famous line, might seem to have little to commend it to a Christian. Is it not a complete distortion of religious truth? But questions of this kind only arise on a very superficial view. The poet is not advancing a theory or rational belief. He is enabling us to see something which we could not otherwise see. And the meaning of the poem as a poem is very different from what it may seem, on the face of it, to tell us. As such it cannot lead us astray. It can only seem to do so if we seek to distil the meaning out of the poem to be judged by ordinary canons of truth. What was said could only be said as the poet has said it.

Incidentally if we consider the matter closely, if we let ourselves come sufficiently under the spell of their poems to read them aright, we are certain to be struck by the affinity between the apparent paganism of a Swinburne or a Housman or an Omar and the infinite yearning that is found in notable hymns and other great religious poems. This will in turn incline us to take a more cautious view of the contempt of earthly things which we may also encounter in religious poetry and prose. Hymns have often been subjected to

foolish and undiscerning comment by those who do not understand what a hymn tries to be.

Unless these matters be borne in mind we shall be in danger of falling into much sophistication that will seriously affect our taste, and which, if we were to carry it out with consistency, as Plato did, would lead to such drastic pruning of our literature that little would survive.

The extraction of a meaning from a poem and appraisement of it by rational standards of truth has mainly been due to enthusiasm for moral or religious truth. But that is not usual to-day. Politics is our culprit, not merely in totalitarian countries where all activities are made to sub-serve a political end but also in democratic countries. Literature of the 'left' in particular is prone to regard conformity with certain social principles as a condition of artistic excellence. The viciousness of this procedure has, however, been obscured for a reason on which our theory has a close bearing. The 'left-winger' is apt to pride himself on being a realist, and realism in the sense that is proper to political thinking has some features in common with the realism which we have found to be the secret of genuine art. This applies especially to the interest in facts as they really are and not as they present themselves under the rosy hues of wishful thinking or distorted by prejudice. Art of the 'left' has thereby been saved from much that is dilettante and artificial. But the gain is won at far too great a cost if it perpetuates the substitution of a spurious realism, spurious, that is, so far as art is concerned, for the integrity that is proper to the artist and the peculiar contact with reality that he can establish. The eventual result will be all the more ruinous to the proper work of the poet.

We have not here, however, the temptation that besets the poet with most subtlety to-day. He is more likely to succumb to the prevalent preoccupation with 'form.' And here it must be said with emphasis that our view in no way minimizes the importance of content. It would be fantastic to suggest that the overt meaning, that which we have described as what the poem seems to say, contributes little to the artistic significance and merit of a poem. We merely protest against the abstraction of this content from the whole and appraisement of it by other than aesthetic standards. The 'something said' is important, but it is important for the poem only in so far as the saying of that particular something in a special way is a revelation of reality in the peculiar way we have noted. But it also follows that the form derives its significance from the whole. This is much overlooked to-day among poets and critics alike. And the reason is not hard to discover. So much has been accomplished in the past, so many possibilities have been exhausted, that the need for novelty is both greater and harder to meet. This stimulates experimentation with

new forms, and the impression is thereby left that there are poetic forms distinct and complete in themselves and waiting to be discovered, waiting in some dim hinterland until the kindly artist appropriates them. But this is a complete misconception. There are indeed few forms and the future may present us with an astonishing richness of them. But they do not hang on a peg to be reached down like a suit of ready made clothes. Form has no significance except in relation to the reality that is being revealed. Admittedly sounds and colours may be pleasing in themselves, and the association of words may attract in themselves. But this is not beauty and it is not art, even where the sensuous attractiveness is very high as in the case of bright colours.[1] The poet must see what has not been seen before and what cannot be expressed in any other way than by means of the symbols which also make it possible for him to see. There are, therefore, no artistic forms unrelated to new perceptions of reality, and it is idle to strive after new developments in art by pouring old wine into new bottles. The wine must also be new.

Warning may be entered here also against the foolish but prevalent belief that, if art is realistic, it must cling very closely to objects as we normally see them. That is precisely what art cannot do. The genuine artist is never 'true to life,' for he is not living normally in moments of artistic creation. He sees what is real, but not as we are normally aware of it. Neither will his feelings be normal, nor those of the characters whom he may describe. The rages or the sorrows in which he traffics, and the moods by which the *dramatis personae* of his world are shaken, are not those we normally experience in situations which outwardly resemble those which the artist may portray. Normally, if we are to avoid sentimentality, our feelings, even feelings of deep joy or sorrow, will be subdued. We do not go storming through life like actors in a play. Neither Lear nor Hamlet nor any other great Shakespearean character has a place in real life. But art is never real life. It is life and it is real, supremely real, but it is both these at a new power. The poet sees with a poignancy and penetration that is altogether unique, and that is precisely what Plato failed to see when he accused Homer and other poets[2] of ascribing to great men feelings and reactions which we would not, in fact, consider proper in 'real life.' It does not follow that emotion, in so far as it enters into art, must always be exaggerated or distorted. It is irrelevant whether it is so or not. What matters is that the poet must be true to his art and not 'true to life,' whether his art be simple or complex, violent or subdued.

[1] It may be objected here that there are good pictures which seem to be nothing but a riot of colours (e.g. some of S. J. Peploe's work). But then the presentation of these colours is deeply significant although they have no obviously recognizable pattern.

[2] See *Republic* 386–391.

This brings us to two further matters. Little has been said in this paper about emotion. But emotion is usually thought to lie at the centre of aesthetic experience. That, however, is not how the matter appears to me. If I am right, the essence of art is insight of a special kind into reality. But such insight is bound to be accompanied by remarkable emotions. Emotions also heighten aesthetic perceptiveness. But emotion itself is not art. Neither is it the business of the artist (as is so often urged)[1] to express emotion. The emotion is derivative and secondary. Its significance depends on the object by which it is aroused. It is the revelation that matters, although the revelation will possess us body and soul, personality being essentially a whole. Subjectivist theories of art mistake the concomitants for the essentials.[2] The positivist does not quite accept this subjectivism, and his theory has also a further feature in common with the view commended here. This is my second point. For the Logical Positivists whose views have such a wide influence at the present time art is not the communication of a special meaning. It is rather some kind of exclamation[3] evocative of feeling. That suggestion is, I think, quite preposterous. But it can be seen what makes it initially attractive if it be allowed that 'overt meaning,' in the sense indicated above, is not the meaning of art as art. It is easy to conclude that if a poem does not depend on its content as such or its apparent meaning, then it has no meaning. As in many other cases positivism owes its plausibility to a half-truth. But a poem or a picture would be nothing without some meaning. There could not even be an exclamation without some specific occasion. The truth then is that meaning, meaning of a rich and new kind, is the very soul of art, it is an awareness and a communication. But it is no ordinary awareness, no ordinary communication.

VI

Hence the predicament of modern poetry. The need for novelty is greater because so much has been notably achieved in the past. The shock that takes us out of ourselves is harder to induce in an age

[1] E.g. by Carritt in *Theory of Beauty*. See especially Chapter 10, p. 272; also *What is Beauty*, Chapter 6.

[2] This goes also for Housman's celebrated dictum: "To transfuse emotion —not to transmit thought, but to set up in the reader's sense a vibration corresponding to what was felt by the writer—is the peculiar function of poetry." *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, page 12. In view of the very close affinity of this theory with Expressionism generally it is rather odd that Listowel, after trouncing the latter very thoroughly (in "The Present State of Aesthetics," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1934–35, p. 119) should approve so heartily of Housman's theory (op. cit., p. 203).

[3] See Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, Chapter VI.

when clever schoolboys can imitate their anthologies with remarkable facility. Poetry is too hard for us because it is also, in one sense, too easy. Originally it may well have sufficed to say 'the grass is green.' The charm of the early poets depends in part on our transporting ourselves into the conditions of their time when many simple utterances had the magic that belongs to the first expression of them. That anyone should think of saying 'the grass is green' without any ulterior purpose might put us into touch with nature in a new way—if it had not already been done. And the trouble by now is that so much has been done. To imitate the past is useless however close we come to our originals. To seek the style of Shakespeare or Milton or Wordsworth is immediately to be sententious and insincere. That was the mistake of the Georgian poets. They brought the achievements of the past to a fine flower of perfection, much more so than is generally allowed, but poetry in the Georgian decades was living on its capital. And that is always fatal. For in art the capital runs out immediately if it is not sunk in new ventures. We understand this by now. But we must not for that reason be unmindful of our heritage. For it is only when the past is most alive in the present that we can break most completely with the past. But there must always be adventure, and it is very hard to-day to find new seas to sail. Some poets seek newness by a very great simplicity, dispensing with artifice where we are most given to expect it. They have had much success, but the course they have taken is also full of risks and dangers, for the simplicity that arrests is never far removed from the trite and the banal. The pitfalls are many, but they are not so many, nor do they gape so darkly as those that lie in wait for the artist who cultivates an artificial novelty. His is the sin against the Holy Ghost that deadens all inspiration. It is the false pride which the shrewd medieval thinker put as the first of the seven deadly sins. To leap into an abyss, to cast ourselves down from high pinnacles, avails nothing. Art has no guardian angels to save us from suicide, or to prevent us from making fools of ourselves before the world. The novelty must be inspired. But there must be novelty. For this reason poetry always invites us to new adaptations, and the break that is required to-day may be so considerable, the growth that is needed if we are not to sicken and fail may be so rigid, that we may find ourselves groping very unsteadily as though we were cast into outer darkness rather than offered a way of salvation. We may, in fact, have reached a point, in many matters besides art, where men can only continue to live by passing over into something very like a new dimension.

This crisis is most evident in religion. The apocalyptic strain in religious thought at the present time may take some rather extravagant forms, but it has significant implications. Supported as it often

is by confusions[1] which a little reflection and analysis would dispel, it nevertheless bears important testimony to a sense of urgency, of doom and 'an end of the world,' of forces that lead to a cataclysmic change, and this in a way that cannot be treated wholly as an epiphenomenon of political and economic conflicts and privations, or a hysterical fantasy arising out of the stresses of war such as your thorough rationalist would have us regard it. It began before the war, and before the impact of the disorders that led to the war had been properly felt. Those are themselves the symptoms of conditions that lie deeper than moral perplexities and economic confusion. They have a significance to-day that they could not have had before. For, occurring within a civilization such as ours, they point to aspirations that cannot be met at any level that is naturally reached by the forces released in the fifteenth century. These were necessary, and there is certainly no remedy for the ills of to-day in the attainments of yet earlier ages. Our troubles arise, not from something we have lost, but from something we have failed to find. Digging in the past will not therefore provide easement, however much a superficial pessimism may underrate the blessings of enlightenment. Creeds outworn are outworn for good. The past succours us when the new emerges. And this is the need that the theology of 'crisis' expresses to-day. The theologians do not understand the matter well. They are wedded to a past that is dead and, seeking to contain within it what is quickening now into life, they can only cover their defeatism and reaction by irresponsible play with extravagant paradoxes, the glorification of nonsense. In particular, they know not the difference, fairly grasped in the main (notwithstanding its inadequacy for us) in the notable theological thinking of the past, between making religion articulate and giving an account of religion in terms of the whole of life. That is indeed the crux of the matter. For however ill they may do their own business, an extraordinarily hard one in all conscience, the theologians whose thought is most astir to-day, Otto, Barth, Niebuhr, Brunner, Berdyaev, do make articulate a supreme need, and one that has now become also imperative, as their urgency shows, the need to infuse into the ages of enlightenment an awareness of reality adequate to their achievements and such as will not be attenuated by them. Amid the strained theorizing and the docile acquiescence in the eruption of primitive and pagan forces there is one most welcome and authentic note in the vigorous religious thinking set in play by continental theologians; it is the insistence on 'the wholly other,' on a reality that forces itself upon our consciousness and refuses to be managed and mastered. This, at

[1] For a brief but most penetrating discussion of these confusions see "The Features and Factors of the World Crisis," by A. E. Garvie, *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XXXIX.

bottom, is why we hear so much of crisis, and of 'existential thinking,' thinking that is rooted in the character and experience of the individual. And it may not be possible to apprehend the matter in a way more conformable to our intellectual advances until the religious experience is itself more substantial and extensive, in other and, I believe, apter words, until the 'revelation' and 'revival' has us more in its grip. Bewilderment may then give way to the self-possession, the mastery, of true prophetic awareness. It is here that the affinity of art and religion is most evident to-day. Both have to mediate for us a reality not ourselves, avoiding the romanticism that confuses us with exudations of ourselves and the obscurantism in which the self is lost. It is easy to fail, and failure is rank in the posturings of poets and religious teachers alike. Of success in either regard one thing alone is plain. We must turn our minds out into the world, break out of the routine of our own orbit to voyage among things, we must touch and see; as the scriptures teach we have to lose our own lives and then we may find that we have saved them. This is what the poet does; conceited he may be and solicitous for praise—what poet is not?—selfish and given to display, but he is this, if at all, as the doctor in Plato's *Republic* is a moneymaker *as well*—as a doctor his care is for the cure of bodies. The poet as poet is in love with the world, not himself. His pride begins as the pride of achievement and awareness. This is what Dostoievski meant in a celebrated passage where he declares that the world shall be saved by beauty, *beauty that is in the world*, not in the eye of the beholder. The supreme virtue here is humility, for the humble are they that move about the world with the lure of the real in their hearts.

NEW BOOKS

Art and Scientific Thought. By MARTIN JOHNSON. (Faber and Faber. 1944.) Pp. 192. Price 16s.

There will be much reluctance to follow the author of this book in stressing "the relatedness between scientific and imaginative mentality" (p. 5) and in regarding this as the main clue to the problem of their place in an integrated cultural development. He is, indeed, very successful in bringing out some important affinities, "structure," "communicability," "an equally severe discipline" (p. 22) and "a remoteness from direct sense experience" (p. 22), (somewhat misconceived, I should think, in the insistence that physics "radically diverges from sense perception" (p. 27).) But he is also apt to underestimate the uniqueness of artistic insight and the peculiar character of the need that aesthetic experience meets. For more is involved here than the fact which the author regards as the main difference between art and science and which he seems to exaggerate, namely, that art requires "a creative response which must differ from one individual to another" (p. 78). Mr. Johnson is at his best in describing the "non-representational" character of art as distinct from "direct copying of nature" (p. 13), the "arousing of imaginative response" (p. 13) whereby any reality with which art "elects momentarily to flirt is only a cloak for symbolic conveyance of a hint to fire the beholder's own imagination" (p. 37). The elaboration of this principle in a series of studies ranging from early Chinese decoration to modern poetry is extremely effective. And it is all the more regrettable therefore that the author, in consistency with his own view of art and scientific thought, should ascribe the realism of artistic symbols to their being "a main source of behaviour and of happiness" (p. 21) and thus capable of translation into ordinary terms. This aspect of the essays belies the very real feeling of the writer himself, evidenced especially in the discussion of Russian ballet and the sculpture of Chartres, for the function of art as a revelation of reality not capable of expression in any other way. Failure to appreciate the true nature of symbolism detracts also from the worth of the scholarly essays in Part III of this book, concerned with the "tragedies of misfitting the scientific to the imaginative" (p. 14), and of Part IV which is a self-contained and highly original study of Leonardo da Vinci—"in some aspects epitome of all misfits between science and society" (p. 79). Least satisfactory is the dismissal of Spinoza as an "artist with a philosophy ruined by compression into scientific instead of imaginative form" (p. 81), and the vaguely subjectivist treatment of religious symbols, all of which are presumed to have "equal right to devotion," and, resting upon "no proof but individual creativeness," lose "the right to be exclusive and the call to proselytise" (p. 124). But if I dwell on matters about which there will be the liveliest disagreement with the author it is because I think it most unfortunate that a writer with such a range of scholarship, and such a feeling for what is excellent in art and a flair for describing it, should be the victim of ill-founded theories about art and science. It should be added that a neatness in the arrangement of the work as a whole—each part has a brief introduction in which its contents are admirably summarized—is matched by clarity and directness of style

and an absence of the jargon which is common in works of this kind. It is an informative and thought-provoking book. Mr. de la Mare contributes a foreword. H. D. Lewis.

Man, Morals and Society. By J. C. Flugel. Pp. 328. (Duckworth. 21s.)

The bulk of this book is concerned with the exposition of the psychoanalytic theory of the "super-ego": its origin, the shifting relations between it and the other two components of the personality—the "ego" and the "id," and the manifestations attributed to the internal conflicts between the three parties. The outline given of this highly complicated matter is admirable, and as clear as circumstances permit. Let us say at the outset that anyone who wants to get a general notion of this aspect of psychoanalytic theory cannot do better than read Professor Flugel's account. There it all is, well documented and brought into relation with the less profound speculations of William MacDougall. I do not propose to discuss the correctness of the account itself, nor the general utility of the theory as an instrument for the interpretation of human eccentricity. Let us accept the main principles, and see what light they throw on the psychological aspect of ethics, because that is the main thesis of the book.

The origin of the super-ego is important. It springs from four sources. Firstly there is the setting up of the "ego-ideal." The " 'real' self does not permanently satisfy our narcissism; as we develop, we become all too painfully aware of its defects and limitations, physical, mental, and moral; and we compensate by building up in imagination a sort of ideal self, which we would like to attain" (p. 35), and towards which a "secondary" narcissism is directed. Unhappily we learn all too little about the "ego-ideal" as we shall see, and, indeed Professor Flugel admits that it has been somewhat neglected. Adler's theories are, of course, mentioned, but the "guiding fiction" in his hands is a compensatory mechanism of an order which does not fit all that the Freudian "ego-ideal" includes. The second source is the "introjected" parental image. The third source of the "super-ego," and nowadays the one most stressed by psychoanalysts who have been influenced by Melanie Klein, is the return of our outward-directed aggressiveness, which finds no allowable or possible target, onto ourselves. Professor Flugel gives evidence for this "Nemissism," as he calls it, in contexts other than those involving the "super-ego," but since our rage is directed against our parents, and since we project our own hostility onto them, so that they are apprehended as charged with an aggressiveness which is not theirs but ours, the introjected images, which go to form our "super-egos," are inflated with "nemissistic" frightfulness. The fourth, and most complicated, element is a dash of sado-masochism in the brew. We not only inflict pain, but we enjoy doing it; we not only invite disaster, but get a kick out of it.

It is this aggressive element, coming from our parents as they are, our idea of our parents, our own aggressiveness, and our sado-masochism, about which we hear most, and Professor Flugel claims that the unveiling of this streak of cruelty in "morality" is one of the most important contributions of psychoanalysis. Herein I think he is right.

The "super-ego" is established for two main purposes. Firstly we require some control inside us because the forces of the "id" are felt to be overwhelming. This consideration is of educational importance; so far from welcoming freedom, we crave for a regulative mechanism, and, say the psychoanalysts, a confirmatory backing in the outside world, in the shape of what

Isaacs has called the "good strict" parent. Secondly we have to restrict our "id" satisfaction, especially aggression, and those sexually-toned processes of which our parents disapprove, in the interests of preserving their love and ensuring our security. If we harbour hostility against our parents, if, furthermore, we confuse thought and deed, and if we do things of which they manifestly disapprove, then all is lost—they will abandon us. So the drama is staged, and Freud presents the "ego," caught as it were between the aggressive threats of the "super-ego" and the pressure of demand from the "id."

Now all this is so far a matter of danger and precaution, but the astonishing thing is that it is phrased in moral terms. We have already indicated, what everyone knows already, that the "super-ego" has something to do with conscience. The play proceeds in terms of crime and punishment. But it may take a very curious turn. Self-punishment is what we should expect, and we are not surprised to find people twisting and turning to seek ever more complicated ways of plaguing themselves—asceticism, accident-proneness, melancholia, etc. But we can, it appears, "project" our own guilty aggressiveness and lust onto others, and occupy ourselves happily hating, and harrying the scapegoats. This is a matter of interpretation, of course, but it certainly helps us to understand much of the behaviour of—other people, at any rate. Moreover there seems to be a constitutional factor at work. Exceptionally interesting experiments, carried out in America, reveal an "intropunitive" and an "extrapunitive" type.

The importance of all this for ethical psychology is obvious, though its implications are extremely complicated. Vulgarly speaking we are being told that a great deal of our "morality" is phoney. Here we are believing that a great deal of enjoyment is "wrong" (the "Policrates Complex," as Professor Flugel calls it), either because we think we ought to be being punished instead of enjoying ourselves, or because our parents' voice (and a false imitation at that) is inveighing against "sins" which, in some sense, we don't really want to commit. Worse still, we torture and otherwise attack innocent people because they are the projecting grounds for our own aggressiveness. We are both fools and knaves, and the implication is that if we realized the truth we should be able to enjoy ourselves more, to love more, and to be more tolerant of our neighbours; in fact we should be much nicer than we are. Is, then, the "super-ego" a disaster?

This question, raised by the invalidity of much of what conscience tells us, leads us to spot-light two dark corners. In the first place, the darker of the two, we come back to the very oddity of a moral formulation in this business at all. Fear we might understand, and "*Angst*" we find, sure enough, but why *guilt*? The problem is made harder because of our linguistic: we use the word "guilt" for the feeling and for the fact. Because it is regarded as wicked to hate one's parents, we are guilty if we do, and so the allegation that we *feel* guilty because we hate our parents causes no surprise, but, I submit, it is not at all obvious. We say, perhaps, that we have introjected our parents, and with them their talk of "naughty" and "good," but these are mere noises, and merely portend pleasure and pain, and yet, somehow they elicit the specific feeling of guilt. Melanie Klein would seem to take it for granted that the pleasure-providing mother and her constituents are directly apprehended as "good," while the cruel depriving mother is directly apprehended as "bad," but then how does the differentiation between pleasure and good come about? Professor Flugel tries to deal with the matter on page 144: "In the human race guilt is at first hardly distinguishable from (fear), though later the differentiation becomes very clear. Guilt (unlike fear) undoubtedly implies the existence of at least some budding moral 'sentiments,' some notion of

how we ought and ought not to behave. . . ." We agree, but what are these "moral sentiments?" Are they some moral sense, which perceives at first with a false fantastic eye, but the existence of which would mean that we have to endow the "super-ego" with a specific moral mechanism in addition to its introjected elements? Or is the "moral eye" in the "ego," because it is presumably the "ego" that makes the "guilty-feeling" response? One contribution made by psycho-analytic theory is to make us consider the question: what in us responds with the feeling of guilt, and precisely to what stimulus do we make this response?

The second corner to which we now turn our spot-light is an adjacent one. After reading all the appalling results of "super-ego" activity—the curtailment of personal development, the "righteous" indignation against the guiltless, the imprisonment of love itself—we cannot help realizing that all the time we have been operating with a second moral eye, which criticizes the ineptitudes of the first. Professor Flugel fully realizes the shortcomings of the "super-ego" as a guide, and the implication that there is another guide which comes less short of the mark. The following quotations indicates this: "There may come about a conflict between the deeper, more infantile, archaic, and unconscious levels of the super-ego . . . and the more conscious ideals which have been modified and adapted as life advances" (p. 62). Scientific treatment of delinquency upsets our unconscious balance, but the humanitarians are not wrong "on the contrary they are often justified alike from the points of view of logic, realism, and enlightened morals" (p. 170). Where, we ask, do "enlightened morals" come from? On page 207 we read of conflicts between the "more progressive, enlightened aims of the more conscious levels of the ego-ideal and the more conservative taboo-like standards of the primitive levels of the super-ego." Again, "We have learnt that much of (man's) morality is crude and primitive, ill-adapted to reality, and often at variance both with his intellect and with his higher conscious aspirations" (p. 241). In a chapter on the "Psychology of Moral Progress" we are told that the passage from reliance on outside authority to the reliance on an inner mentor is "continued within the individual mind, in the gradual taking over by the ego with its capacity for reason, discrimination, and delicate adaptation to reality, of the control which at a lower level is exercised more blindly and indiscriminately by the super-ego." Finally on page 260 we learn that the "super-ego" is "clearly unsuited to serve (as it is often expected to do) as the supreme court of moral appeal. If, as seems to be the case, man is by his very nature doomed to conflict, we must seek the ultimate solution of conflict at the higher level of reason rather than at the lower one of conscience or tradition." Somehow or other the conscious moral judgments modify the content of the "ego-ideal," and we may hope that the psycho-analysts will turn their attention once more to that neglected "organ." It is sometimes thought of as identical with the "super-ego," but it seems to correspond to those "higher levels" of which Professor Flugel speaks. Again we come back to the question: where is the true moral eye? The intuitionists at any rate are put on their guard because so many of their intuitions are of dubious origin. The subjectivists will not benefit, because, whereas the "lower levels of the super-ego" might be interpreted as precautionary, the "higher levels" pose a standard which might spell ruin to the individual and to his community.

We might think that the study of people who have no "super-ego" would help us, and so indeed it might, only there aren't any. There is, however, a peculiar difficulty in examining the problem from this point of view. Sometimes, when discussing deficiencies of the "super-ego," Professor Flugel writes as though he had confused the *form* of the "super-ego" with the *content*. In

a chapter dealing with evasions of the super-ego, he writes: "In the past many highly moral people have, without any qualms of conscience, kept slaves, burnt heretics and witches, or passed sentence of death on those who have committed petty thefts—all carried out under the influence of moral standards that we now deplore" (p. 211.) The implication of the whole passage of which this quotation is a part is, I take it, that the "super-ego" has been evaded, and is therefore in some sense deficient, but surely the "super-ego" might be working perfectly satisfactorily, so far as a restrictive mechanism is concerned; what we complain of is that it does not restrict what we consider to be the right things, which is an entirely different matter; it is not the "super-ego" *qua* "super-ego" which is at fault, it is its content. Again he says: "We have seen that . . . there is a considerable diversity of routes along which, *notwithstanding the super-ego* (my italics) we may succeed in being sinners" (p. 214). But, surely, if it is *notwithstanding* the super-ego that we become sinners, there ought to be evidence of 'super-ego' disapproval which we may be said to have eluded; cases in which, deplorable though it may be, the 'super-ego' makes no complaint whatever, cannot be cases of evasion of a prohibition which is not there. The upshot of this somewhat unsatisfactory discussion seems to be that we are faced with two more "Sources of Morality," the primitive, or 'protopathic' and the enlightened or 'epicritic,' and it is the contribution of psycho-analysis to have pointed out that at first blush they look exactly alike, and therefore to invite further enquiry into their differences.

There is, however, another contribution. In his sixteenth chapter Professor Flugel, as we have seen, discusses the psychology of moral progress, and in it he shows how psychoanalysis may be regarded as a milestone on the road, helping us to replace unconscious processes by conscious ones, helping us towards greater realism, and helping us to pass "from moral inhibitions to spontaneous goodness" and from "fear to security."

Finally we have four chapters on the repercussion of psychoanalytic theory on sociological problems. The first, on "Taboo and its Equivalents" throws a light on taboo as an external control which corresponds to, and almost takes the place of, the "super-ego." This tendency to "introject" external controls, and then turn again to external authority, because "obedience is easier than self-control" is of the greatest interest. This chapter finds a place in the series of chapters dealing with the development of the "super-ego," the other three sociological chapters are placed at the end of the book. They deal with Religion, politics and war. They are interesting and important for students of social psychology. The reader may be somewhat surprised to find Professor Flugel looking with so kindly an eye at Cattell's "group mind," or "Theopsyche" as he calls it, as a possible projecting ground for our need of a perfect, protecting Heavenly Father—so dreary an *Ersatz* will require a great deal of advertising before it becomes palatable. In the chapter on Politics we are warned to beware of voting "left" simply to spite our "super-egos," or "right" simply to curry favour with them.

War is, of course, a familiar topic, and we know what to expect, but as we read the familiar theory an uneasiness, which has been mounting at the back of our minds, comes to the fore. On page 310 we read: "War provides the most thoroughgoing and morally satisfactory rationalization for unsocial conduct that has yet been discovered." On page 210 we read: "In its moral aspects it (rationalization) might be described as an opiate applied to the super-ego, with the help of which we can lull it into a relative insensibility." But it is only insensible of the "real" motives which are being satisfied; it is far from being drugged when it comes to its approval of our efforts in the

pursuit of what it conceives (albeit falsely) to be a "just" end. It may regard "total war" in a just cause to be virtuous, and the burning of wicked witches as meritorious; the whole point of rationalization is that the super-ego is acting *morally*, and to complain that its moral standard is defective is not to bring a charge against the vigour and efficiency of the "super-ego," but against lowness of the ideals which appeal to it. Where it *is* defective, presumably, is in its unawareness that the "id" is satisfying that parentally-directed aggressiveness which it is the business of the "super-ego" to hold in check. The uneasiness, to which I have referred, is aroused by an ever clearer realisation that we are talking in personal terms about these psychic mechanisms; the "super-ego" is "taken in," the "id" "seizes opportunities" for satisfaction, while the "ego" "keeps a watchful eye" on the threatening "super-ego." This personalized dramatic formulation makes the psychoanalytic formulations vivid and realistic, but I feel convinced that the full contribution of psychoanalytic theory to ethical psychology will not be realized until the drama is reformulated in impersonal terms, then at least we shall be freed from the danger of judging the "super-ego" from an ethical point of view and from a psychological point of view at the same time.

W. J. H. Sprott.

Pacifism and Conscientious Objection. By G. C. Field. (Cambridge University Press. 1945. Pp. viii + 123. Price 3s. 6d. net.)

This is a valuable study, based upon the statements of several thousands of conscientious objectors who have appeared before the Tribunal of which Professor Field was a member, and upon some published expositions of Pacifism. The book has a double interest: it gives a factual account of the various types of objector that appear before Tribunals, and also a reasoned criticism of the arguments they put forward. Conscientious objectors to military service, like conscientious accepters of it, are of very varying qualities of mental calibre, and have had very varying measures of education; their grounds of objection may be classified roughly as religious, ethical, or political. Professor Field evidently considers that in the majority of cases their objections are sincere, and he acquits all but a small minority of being actuated mainly at bottom by cowardice; but he suggests that in many cases it is doubtful whether they have devoted that degree of consideration to the opposing arguments which alone would justify anyone in professing either a conscientious objection to military service or a conscientious acceptance of it. He finds that many of them are satisfied with clichés like "war never settles anything," without having seriously inquired whether history supports this view. No doubt many of those who accept military service would be just as unable to give a reasoned account of the faith that is in them; but *they* do not claim any special privilege, nor profess a morality superior to that of the great majority of their fellow-countrymen.

It is interesting to learn from Professor Field that less of the time of Tribunals is devoted to discovering whether the applicants have a conscientious objection to combatant service, than to discovering what form of alternative service their conscience will allow them to undertake. He speaks with appreciation of the many who are willing to undertake service which is almost as dangerous as combatant service on the average is; and with merited lack of sympathy of those who object to being directed into any form of service at all. With regard to the political objectors he makes the interesting

remark that in his opinion only those who are conscientious believers in Fascism are justified in claiming to be conscientious objectors to service in this war.

In his examination of the arguments put forward by objectors Professor Field has not much difficulty in showing that they fail to draw distinctions which are familiar to all serious students of moral philosophy; that they almost always fail to distinguish the question whether a state is justified in making war, from the question whether a citizen is justified in taking part in a war that is already being waged; that they assume too readily that "the end can never justify the means," and that war, admittedly a very great evil, is in fact the greatest of all evils. Most readers of this book will be led to the conclusion that the intellectual grounds of conscientious objection are unsatisfactory, but will at the same time be glad that this country has recognized the existence of conscientious objection and has made provision for a just and sympathetic treatment of genuine objectors. ANON.

The Development of Mathematical Logic and of Logical Positivism in Poland Between the Two Wars. By Z. JORDAN. (Polish Science and Learning. O.U.P. 1945. Pp. 48. 2s. 6d.)

This is, I believe, the first complete account in English, even in outline, of the work of that extraordinary band who, in Lwów, Warsaw and other Polish centres, between the two wars, enriched logic and philosophy with a series of brilliantly original and fertile contributions. The Lwów-Warsaw School seemed, in those days, very far from Cambridge, Oxford, London or Harvard; we were never quite sure how to pronounce their names correctly, but a publication in any accessible language by a member of the School was eagerly read and discussed by those interested in modern logic elsewhere. Now, thanks to Dr. Jordan's excellent monograph, it is possible to trace the development of this School from Twardowski, who prepared the way before 1914–18, to the logicians of Dr. Jordan's own generation who, with him, have continued their studies in foreign camps and on strange battlefields, or besieged and persecuted in Poland, during the past six melancholy years. To an English reader, apart from its great philosophical significance, Dr. Jordan's essay is an impressive record of devotion to intellectual clarity and truth among external conditions which would have defeated less gifted and determined adherents. Fortunately, a plant of such vigour does not easily die. Dr. Jordan is able to conclude his monograph with news that another great logical discovery has recently been made in Poland.

After an historical introduction, Dr. Jordan describes the contributions to mathematical logic which resulted from a critical examination of *Principia Mathematica*, by Chwistek and Lukasiewicz, early in the nineteen-twenties. These include Chwistek's revision of Russell's Theory of Types and solution to the problem of the axiom of reducibility; Lukasiewicz's introduction of truth-tables and truth-matrices; Kuratowski's theory of relations and Tarski's definition of all logical constants of the propositional calculus in terms of equivalence, which led to Lesniewski's investigation of the nature and function of definition in deductive systems, called "Protothetic." Later, Tarski introduced his important notion of "metalogic" or, more generally, "metatheory." The distinction between a theory and its metatheory is that between using a language and talking about that language. This requires, Tarski thought, a language of higher logical order. Tarski also believed that every metalogical

or syntactical language should be completely symbolized, thus eliminating ordinary speech from logical discourse. Dr. Jordan does not assert that this result has yet been achieved. Tarski's conception of metalogic led him to a general study of semantics and to an analysis of the meaning of "true" and "false," particularly as applied to the propositions of deductive systems. He proves that a definition of these words can be given only in a language "richer," i.e. of higher logical type, than that in which the true or false statement occurs. He appears, however, to conclude, according to Dr. Jordan, that "A 'true statement' is definable for any formal language of a finite order with the help of morphological terms only, that is, of terms which refer only to the shape of the expressions and of the relations between them" (p. 23).

Chapter 4 reviews the work of Lesniewski and Chwistek on the foundations of mathematics, and Chapter 5 the introduction by Lukasiewicz of many-valued systems of logic. This is an outstanding contribution of the Polish School and it is lamentable that the manuscript of a work by Lukasiewicz on this important subject was destroyed in the siege of Warsaw.

Chapter 6 is a brief, but interesting, account of studies in the history of logic by Polish logicians. Lukasiewicz found in Stoic writers views of the calculus of propositions, implication and truth functions, developed in opposition to Aristotle, which strikingly resemble modern doctrines. Two Thomist members of the School, the Rev. J. Salmucha and the Rev. M. Bochenski, O.P., have applied the methods of Lukasiewicz to the works of mediaeval logicians. Dr. Jordan whets our appetite for a fuller account of these historical excursions.

Chapters 7 to 9 outline Polish contributions to logical positivism. Polish philosophers were attracted to this movement for its anti-irrationalistic attitude. They were not, however, members of the "Wiener Kreis" and were equally influenced by English empiricist philosophers, such as Hume and Mill, by scientific positivists, Poincaré, Duhem and Mach, and, of course, by the logicians, Whitehead, Russell, Frege and the rest. Polish philosophers accepted the view that misuse of language is the chief source of philosophical problems, and that only sensibly verifiable propositions are scientifically valid, all non-rational "intuitions" being excluded from knowledge. The subject of philosophical research is the clarification of the fundamental notions, propositions and methods of particular sciences. Since ordinary language is an inadequate tool for this purpose, their programme also included the creation of a philosophical vocabulary purified by the methods of mathematical logic.

The chief figures in this movement were Kotarbinski and Ajdukiewicz. Kotarbinski, a man of wide interests and a social reformer of great national influence, formulated a philosophy of "Reism" in which he admits only one category of existence, that of physical objects or bodies. Only words denoting bodies are "names"; those for all other objects of discourse are "quasi-names." A sentence is significant only if it contains a name, or can be translated into other sentences which contain names. Kotarbinski applied his theory to the analysis of propositions about the external world, to a translation of psychological into physiological statements and to the development of a general theory of action which he called *praxeology*. His views seem to be similar to those of Moore's Philosophy of Common Sense and to some versions of Russell's distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description.

Ajdukiewicz, logician and philosopher, invoked the methods of mathematical logic to define the meaning of a significant expression in any language in terms of the rules of its usage. He distinguished three types of rules: (*a*) axiomatic, (*b*) deductive and (*c*) empirical. A statement is significant if

it is asserted in accordance with an appropriate rule. By a "language," however, Ajdukiewicz did not mean a "natural" language such as English, French or German, whose rules are fluid and undetermined, but rather the "language" or notation of systems of symbolic logic, mathematics and some branches of mathematical physics, in which rules and their application are precisely determined. Influenced by Poincaré, moreover, Ajdukiewicz adopted a radical "conventionalism," according to which a view of the world does not depend wholly on what is given to sense experience but also on the choice of a language in which it is described. Newton's picture of the physical world, e.g. differs from that of Einstein partly because their "languages" are different. There are no empircal facts which must be described in expressions of any particular logical form.

The pupils and followers of Kotarbinski and Ajdukiewicz, sometimes in controversy with philosophers of opposing views, developed and applied the methods of logical positivism to many philosophical problems.

Dr. Jordan closes his narrative with a personal postscript conveying the very different atmosphere in which philosophical work is produced in Poland from that which still prevails in the ancient English Universities. But he is proud, as he well may be, of Polish contributions to European culture. His pride and hope for the future are amply justified by the extensive bibliography of publications by members of the Polish School of logic and philosophy at the end of his Monograph.

Dr. Jordan's survey is intended to be mainly expository and it would be unfair to complain of lack of criticism of the views he presents. So I will only vent a vague uneasiness left by his exposition.

While acknowledging, without reserve, the brilliance and ingenuity of their contributions to philosophy, I wonder whether Polish philosophers are not too much under the spell of mathematical logic. The impression conveyed is that those methods which have been so extensively applied to solve the problems of the foundations of mathematics must be applicable to all other philosophical problems. With a little patience, ingenuity and a complicated technical equipment, definitions will be formulated and rules devised for a clear and precise use, within a symbolic system, of such words as "true," "physical object," "good," which will dispel the philosophical puzzles derived from the vague use of these and other words in ordinary speech. Now this attitude assumes, without proof, (*a*) that all philosophical puzzles are of the same type as those in the foundations of mathematics, (*b*) that ordinary language, in which these words, and philosophical puzzles about them, occur, is an inadequate instrument of knowledge for which a logically perfect language should ideally be substituted. But consider the problem about the existence of the external world which puzzled Berkeley. I cannot see that any precise definition of "physical object," even if it were in the hallowed notation of mathematical physics, could solve this problem. Moreover, to offer such a solution would be a simple *ignoratio elenchi*. Berkeley wants some account of what he means when he says, "There is a chair;" "That is a kettle;" not what a logician or scientist thinks he ought to mean, since he talks neither symbolic logic nor mathematical physics. Yet he knows, as we all do, that there are chairs, kettles and other physical objects, and his language needs no improvement to express this knowledge. This is even more evident in philosophical problems of ethics, aesthetics, politics and similar subjects. Of what use would be a definition of "right" or "good," e.g. which took no account of the ordinary usage of these words? Let it be agreed that philosophical problems are linguistic in origin, nevertheless, it does not follow that they are soluble by the precise definition of disputed words. On the

contrary, a philosophical puzzle may be intensified by an attempt at rigid definition (cf. " 'good' means 'pleasant.' " "All actions are 'really' selfish, however much they appear otherwise") and resolved by a series of concrete examples illustrating vague usage, which dispels the temptation to seek spurious clarification. I agree with Polish philosophers that part of our task as empiricists is to dispel irrational myths masquerading as profound philosophical truths. I would, however, ask them to consider whether a too great philosophical reliance on the abstract apparatus of symbolic logic may not lead to the side-tracking of problems which require for their solution careful consideration of the actual usage of the language in which they occur.

M. MACDONALD.

The Moral Theory of Evolutionary Naturalism. By PROFESSOR WILLIAM F. QUILLIAN, Jr. (Yale University Press. London: Humphrey Milford, 1945. Pp. xiii + 154. 20s.)

The work gives a very sound and readable account of the doctrines criticized and of the objections to them, objections which certainly need from time to time to be restated. On the other hand it could not be claimed that the work showed originality or carried the controversy further than it has already been carried, and it would therefore not be justifiable, especially in these days of paper shortage, to give it a long review. Almost all the major points are in fact stated mainly by means of (apposite) quotations from other writers, which in all make up a very large proportion of the book. I am in agreement with the stock arguments against evolutionary naturalism which the author has brought forward and saw little to criticize in their presentation, whether by the author himself or by those he quotes. But it is much to be regretted that the only exponents of "Evolutionary Naturalism" explicitly discussed are writers of the nineteenth century (Darwin, Spencer, W. K. Clifford, Leslie Stephen and Guyau). The only more modern writer of the naturalist type treated is Westermarck, and he is in rather a different class since he does not make the concept of Evolution the main basis of his theory and (no doubt more wisely or less unwisely) treats ethics in psychological rather than in biological terms. The book would require much amplification if it were to cover psychological naturalism also.

The author has two aims: the vindication of an objective non-naturalistic ethics and the vindication of theism. The arguments for the latter will meet with suspicion and doubt from more readers than will his criticism of certain attempts to overthrow the former; but they are again, though by no means original and conveyed chiefly by quotations, well worth consideration. But the subject is treated far too sketchily. I think on the whole that it should either have been left out of the book or handled more thoroughly.

There are two defects in exegesis which I might mention: (1) It is surely not true of all evolutionists, especially more modern ones, that they hold that conduct is ultimately determined only by pleasure and pain (p. 61). (2) I think the author is much too inclined to whitewash the theologians of the past, especially when he suggests that no reputable ones believed in eternal damnation except in a more refined interpretation which relieved the doctrine of its ethically objectionable character! But these points are of no importance for the main argument of the book. A. C. EWING.

Introduction to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. By T. D. Weldon, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1945. Pp. viii + 205. Price 12s. 6d.)

The right way of approaching Kant, according to Mr. Weldon, is historical: we must discover just what questions Kant himself was asking and why he came to ask them. It is no use assuming that he was dealing with some timeless problem, his solution of which can be pronounced right or wrong by simple inspection. There are no eternal problems in philosophy, if only because, in the words of Mr. Weldon's preface, "the aim of philosophers is always to understand and interpret the achievements of scientific and other specialists in different fields." Every advance in the sphere of positive knowledge sets a new problem for the philosopher. To understand Kant we must accordingly see his work as (*a*) the culmination of a continuous development in European philosophy from Descartes onwards, and (*b*) an attempt to find a philosophical basis for contemporary science, i.e. to justify Newton.

This argument, in which Mr. Weldon is in substantial agreement with the late Professor Collingwood, deserves careful scrutiny. If it means only that every philosophical doctrine is best understood in its historical context, and that the right approach to philosophy is through its history, then it seems to be simple common sense. But if it is held, as Collingwood held it, to justify the assertion that philosophy is an historical enquiry and nothing more, that is surely a much more dubious proposition. If it were true we ought to be able to pronounce on the merits of rival philosophical theories in the same way in which we pronounce on rival historical theories; but does anyone suggest that we could settle the points at issue between, say, Leibniz and Spinoza in this manner?

The truth is that our study of the history of philosophy (and indeed of any history) is undertaken to throw light on our own present problems. The past survives "incapsulated," to use Collingwood's own word, in the present. And this means that even if there are no eternal problems in philosophy, there are some which arise in recognizably similar form over and over again in the development of any given tradition. Mr. Weldon himself admits that there is "at least a family likeness" between the questions asked in European philosophy during the last two thousand years, and says that it is sensible to ask whether Kant's answers to his questions are relevant to the questions I am trying to answer for myself. But he does not draw the conclusion, which seems to me unavoidable, that an introduction to Kant should have almost as much to say about post-Kantian as about pre-Kantian philosophy. It should do this if it is to exhibit Kant's problems as living problems and his attempt to solve them as worth our study. If we take a typical Kantian problem—say that of *a priori* synthesis—we can show, as Mr. Weldon does, how it arises for Kant out of the thought of his philosophical predecessors and the problems set by the science of his day. But it is surely important to show also that it has a relevance beyond its immediate context and is not overthrown because modern scientists have gone beyond Newton. To emphasize the connection with Newton is to emphasize just that aspect of Kant's work which has lost its interest.

Apart from these general considerations, Mr. Weldon's book has certain merits and defects which ought to be mentioned. It falls into three parts. Part I is an account of Kant's predecessors in philosophy from Descartes to Hume, together with a survey of the doctrines of Baumgarten and Meier, whose works he used for lecture purposes, and of his own early writings. The sections on Descartes, Leibniz, Locke and Hume all seem to me admirable, and the account of Kant's own pre-critical thinking will certainly be useful.

But I cannot see that the pages on Baumgarten and Meier, especially those on Baumgarten, will mean anything to beginners on Kant, or even to comparatively advanced students. Mr. Weldon's plan to include them in his historical survey is sound enough, but he might have carried it out with more regard to the weaknesses of human nature.

Part II is a 70-page summary of the argument of the *Critique*, with a certain amount of comment thrown in (especially on the Appendix to the Dialectic). About this I can only say that I am not sure what purpose it is intended to serve. It is too short to give much aid in detailed exegesis, for which in any case the student can turn to existing commentaries; and if a general survey of the argument of the *Critique* is wanted, why should not recourse be had to the *Prolegomena*?

Part III is altogether different and deserves serious study, though it is scarcely in place in an introduction. In it Mr. Weldon offers his interpretation of the Analytic, which he holds is designed to answer the question "how is pure physics possible?"[1] Kant's answer to this question is immensely complicated, we are told, by his uncritical acceptance from contemporary psychology of the doctrine of inner sense, which he sought to supplement by his account of *a priori* knowledge. We can see some of these difficulties if we ask what is the peculiar content of inner sense. We cannot say, as we might, that emotional and volitional states are known by inner sense, because according to the psychology Kant was accepting these things are not known at all. What Kant does suppose us to know by inner sense, if Mr. Weldon is right, is our own (past) acts of awareness. We have inner intuitions of ourselves as perceiving, and these are "literally scattered about" among our perceptions of things, "entirely separate both from one another and from those perceptions" (p. 156). It is on this basis that the problem of separating objective and subjective successions arises and the main questions of the Analytic are posed.

Whatever we may finally think about this view, it has the merit of offering a solution, and an attractive one, of a problem which has not been satisfactorily dealt with by past commentators. Kant's views on inner sense are undoubtedly both crucial for the understanding of his argument in the Analytic and very odd in themselves; and Mr. Weldon has done well to bring these points out. Whether he is right in excluding emotions, etc., from inner sense altogether is not certain; for clearly these belong to the phenomenal self, and we must have some awareness of them. But even if we say that inner sense includes introspection as normally understood, we have still to deal with such statements as that of A 98, that "all our representations, as modifications of the mind, belong to inner sense." Kant's views clearly were influenced by his psychology; and Mr. Weldon has done a real service in calling attention to the fact and trying to discover just what he took for granted.

W. H. Walsh.

Augustine's Quest of Wisdom. Life and Philosophy of the Bishop of Hippo. By Vernon J. Bourke, Ph.D. (Milwaukee, Wis., The Bruce Publishing Company. 1945. Pp. xi + 323. Price $3.00.)

In the earlier phases of Christian thought there was no clear theoretical delimitation of the spheres of theology and philosophy. To those Christian

[1] Actually it is designed to answer the question "how is pure science of Nature possible?" where Nature is taken to include minds as well as bodies. The connection of the *Critique of Pure Reason* with Newton is not in fact so close as Mr. Weldon says, and it is to *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, if anywhere, that we must look for the justification of Newtonian science.

writers who showed sympathy with Hellenic thought (e.g. Origen or St. Gregory of Nyssa), Greek philosophy, especially "Platonism," appeared as a preparation for the full wisdom of Christianity, and to penetrate by the understanding the Christian wisdom, so far as may be, and to see the world in the light of that wisdom, using both faith and reason, was taken to be the task of the true philosopher. Augustine, as a Christian, shared this outlook: it was wisdom in the above sense for which he sought, not simply philosophical knowledge in the later academic sense, and the sub-title of Dr. Bourke's book, *Life and Philosophy of the Bishop of Hippo*, must be understood in the light of the main title, *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom*. I mention this, since it is only fair to readers of *Philosophy* to point out that this is not a specialist work on Augustine's philosophy in the narrower sense of the word: it does not profess to be a monograph on Augustine's relations to Neo-platonism, or on his utilization of Neo-platonic themes (though it contains a brief treatment of these subjects, of course), or on his influence on subsequent philosophy.

But, if it is only fair to readers of *Philosophy* to have pointed out the above fact, it is only fair to the author to congratulate him on the way in which he has carried out a rather formidable undertaking, that of giving in one book a scholarly, succinct and readable account of the great African Doctor's intellectual and moral development, of his literary output (which was very great) and of his ecclesiastical activity. As an Augustinian scholar, Dr. Bourke is well equipped for the task, and in my opinion he has provided a useful and valuable work of synthesis for those who desire a readable, reliable and thoughtful study of the entire life, development and activity of a great man and thinker, who has profoundly influenced Christian theology and mediaeval (in some instances even modern) philosophy. The work does not set out to be a specialist monograph on a departmental theme; but it would be quite wrong to conclude that it is "hagiography": it is the fruit of scholarly research and reflection. (There are two useful appendices, one a chronological list of Augustine's works, the other a chronology of his life. There is also an index.)

As regards the role played by Neo-platonism in the conversion of Augustine, Dr. Bourke is undoubtedly right in saying that it was the Neo-platonic conception of spiritual being and the Plotinian doctrine of evil as privation which enabled Augustine "to bridge the gap between Manichean materialism and the Christian understanding of a purely immaterial substance," and to see how he could dispense with the Manichaean dualism without having to sacrifice the idea of a good Creator. In other words, the function of Neo-platonism in the intellectual stage of Augustine's conversion was to show him how Christianity is intellectually credible. In his subsequent presentation of the Christian "wisdom" St. Augustine certainly used Neo-platonic themes (though their influence on his thought tended to diminish as time went on); but it is inaccurate to speak as though there were ever a really distinct stage, "cut off with a hatchet," when he was simply a Neo-platonic philosopher. The author rightly insists on the fundamental unity and continuity of the Saint's development.

Dr. Bourke touches on the admittedly extremely difficult question of the nature of Augustine's "divine Illumination," and leaves it open whether it is "natural as well as supernatural." Now, Dr. Bourke admits that it replaces the Platonic theory of reminiscence, so that from that point of view it should be "natural," while the words of Augustine himself (*De. Trinit.*, 12, 15, 24) would seem to indicate the same thing. Moreover, Augustine was quite well aware that a morally bad man might recognize mathematical truths; he can hardly have thought that it required supernatural aid (in the theological sense) to perceive with certainty every eternal truth. As Malebranche re-

marked, "the eternal Word speaks the same language to all nations, to the Chinese and Tartars as to the French and the Spanish."

As Dr. Bourke had no intention of writing a history of Hellenic thought, it may be a little ungracious to cavil at his summary statement that, "It is quite possible that the reduction of the Platonic Academy to skepticism, after the death of Plato, led some centuries later to the first feature of Neo-platonism, its supernaturalism." Perhaps I misunderstand the author's meaning; but the movement which, passing through Neo-pythagoreanism and Middle Platonism, culminated in Neo-platonism, was certainly very much more than a reaction to the scepticism of the Middle Academy and of the New Academy in its earlier phase.

One small point. It is true that "there is some evidence that Porphyry was an apostate from Christianity," as Dr. Bourke says in a footnote, and Socrates, the historian, who affirms it as a fact (*Hist. Eccl.*, 3, 23), may be right; but Augustine's words (*Civit. Dei.*, 10, 28) that if Porphyry had ever really known Christ, *nec ab eius saluberrima humilitate resiluisses*, could quite well be interpreted as the author interprets them in the text of his book, when he says that, "Porphyry knew enough about Christian teachings to have accepted Christ, but he did not have the humility needed for such a step." The question, however, is whether the philosopher ever really understood Christianity: St. Augustine evidently thought not, and the fragments of Porphyry's anti-Christian writings, though interesting enough, rather support Augustine's view.

F. C. COPLESTON.

The Criticism of Experience. By D. J. B. HAWKINS. (London: Sheed and Ward 1945. 8vo, pp. 124.)

This is a book by a Roman Catholic priest about the questions concerning knowledge which have occupied most of the attention of philosophers since Descartes. Father Hawkins recognizes that "it would be anachronistic to look for a full answer to these problems in thinkers before Descartes," but he believes that the realism which he finds in Aristotle and his best mediaeval followers can be so developed that it provides an explicit and adequate answer. Although the book is not historical in plan, it contains shrewd comments on the views of the principal philosophers from Descartes to Kant and some discussion of the development which such views have undergone in quite recent times. Among modern philosophers Reid and Hamilton receive most praise. Indeed the whole book might be said to be a restatement of the theses of the Scottish Common Sense School. In a summary at the end Father Hawkins writes: "A sound criticism of experience does not turn out to be the reversal of common sense which it has sometimes been feared to be; it is much more an analysis of what our common beliefs are really about, and how we come to have them. We have maintained that we are conscious of ourselves as substances and agents, possessing both bodily and mental properties and experiencing transitory sensations. We have certain intuitions of our own past in memory, of external bodies with which we are in contact and of other embodied minds. In addition we make many inferences in the fields of both memory and perception, and to these inferences we rationally attribute various degrees of probability."

Father Hawkins suggests in his foreword that at the present moment many English philosophers occupy themselves with linguistic analysis because they have lost heart for what he calls real philosophy, but it is interesting to notice that some of the group whom he seems to have in mind are now prepared to

assert that they know (in an honest-to-God sense) facts of a kind or kinds which their recent predecessors in the empiricist tradition thought could never be known. These philosophers argue, however, that scepticism arises from a mistaken assumption that all we ever know must be known in one and the same sense, and they therefore try to distinguish different senses of the word "know" which are appropriate to different contexts. Father Hawkins may be suspicious of such allies as these, but his own argument would undoubtedly be stronger if he paid more attention to questions of terminology and tried to anticipate in more detail the difficulty which old-fashioned empiricists are likely to feel when they read his claims to direct knowledge in so many different contexts. He tells us for example that we have consciousness or experience (he uses both words) of our own bodies as masses, but he does not examine the use of the words "consciousness" and "experience," which seem to be all important in such an assertion. According to ordinary usage these terms are appropriate only when we are talking of our own mental processes. Thus a man may say that he is conscious of a desire to eat and that he experiences pleasure when he sees food on the table. If then we are invited to look for a consciousness or experience of our bodies as masses we do not know what to expect and must conclude that the words are being used in a new way which may perhaps be justifiable by some analogy but not without special explanation.

On page 45 Father Hawkins maintains against Professor Price that a visual datum cannot be three-dimensional, and adds that "a flat pictorial representation of ideal accuracy would give us precisely the same visual datum as a set of real bodies in three dimensions." This is surely a serious mistake in phenomenology.

Although the book is not likely to convince those who do not already accept Father Hawkins's general position, it contains a number of interesting suggestions, e.g. about self-consciousness, memory and the awareness of duration, which will interest many others, and it has the two considerable virtues of being short and well written. WILLIAM KNEALE.

The Astronomical Horizon. By SIR JAMES JEANS, O.M., F.R.S. The Philip Maurice Deneke Lecture, 1944. (Oxford University Press. 1945, Pp. 23. Price 2s. 6d. net.)

In this very interesting Lecture Sir James Jeans has brought his well-known skill in exposition to bear on the broadest problem of astronomy—the structure and course of evolution of the physical universe. Approaching the matter appropriately from the historical standpoint, he leads up to the present view of the universe as an expanding system of nebulae, each a family of stars, in one of which our Earth is situated. The number of nebulae and stars can be conjectured, but of more ultimate significance is the number of fundamental particles—protons, electrons, etc.—which the universe contains, and this, according to the facts available and theories widely favoured, amounts to about 10^{79}. This figure leads Sir James into a discussion of the fascinating theories which have been suggested connecting the characteristics of the universe with those of the fundamental particles—in particular, the remarkable work of Eddington—but it might perhaps have been remarked that some authorities—notably Milne, whose work is referred to, and probably Einstein—favour the idea of an infinite number of particles; if this is right the numerical relationships which are discussed in the lecture would appear to lose their significance.

If, however, we accept the idea of a finite universe, then there is good

reason to accept also a figure in the neighbourhood of 10^{79} for the number of particles in it. It is difficult, however, to grant more than chance coincidence to the fact that certain other derivable large numbers are "of the order of" the square root of this figure, notwithstanding that Sir James describes them as "of *precisely* this order of magnitude" (my italics). The only "precise" suggestion for the number of particles is that of Eddington, which is equivalent to $1 \cdot 2 \times 10^{79}$; the square root of this is $3 \cdot 4 \times 10^{39}$. This figure Sir James Jeans regards as "suspiciously near" the ratio of the electrostatic to the gravitational attraction between a proton and an electron in the hydrogen atom, which is $2 \cdot 3 \times 10^{39}$. A definite discrepancy of at least 30 per cent. between figures which there is no independent reason to suppose to be related at all is scarcely a cause for suspicion. Sir James cites also the ratio (about $5 \cdot 0 \times 10^{39}$) of the radius of the universe in its supposedly original state to the conjectured "radius" of the electron, and the ratio (about $4 \cdot 2 \times 10^{39}$) of the supposed age of the universe to the time light would take to travel across an electron. There seems no reason to choose the original rather than the present radius of the universe since it is the present "radius" of the electron that is estimated, or the radius and light-time of the electron rather than those of the hydrogen atom, particularly since the hydrogen atom has been chosen for comparing electrical and gravitational forces (at closer ranges the electrostatic law of force at least appears to break down). Nor, indeed, is there any obvious reason for choosing the proton and electron in the hydrogen atom to give the force ratio rather than, say, the proton and neutron in the heavy hydrogen nucleus. This would give an infinite value, which might with equal justification be claimed as evidence that the number of particles is infinite. Such speculations as these cannot be taken seriously by those familiar with the profound significance which has time and again been found to reside in apparently negligible departures from numerical exactitude.

We must also break a lance with Sir James over his statement that "absolute truth makes its exit with absolute time and space." This seems to us a complete misreading of the principle of relativity and to be equivalent to saying that absolute meaning disappeared when the tower of Babel arose. The fact is that various systems of time and space measurement can with equal validity be adopted for describing the absolute truth represented by observations. In the particular problem with which Sir James is here concerned it is true that we can adopt different time-scales, but when we choose, as Professor Milne does, a time-scale for measuring *distances*, we come up against the absolute truth which, notwithstanding Sir James's dictum, still remains; for, by so doing, we make it possible to transform away *relative* motion which has absolute physical effects.

Apart from the controversial aspect of the lecture, however, Sir James has given us a highly stimulating account of what is in many respects the most fascinating side of modern astronomical thought. An exceptionally large number of excellent photographs are reproduced, and it would be difficult for anyone to peruse this booklet without finding his interest quickened in the subject with which it deals. HERBERT DINGLE.

Plato's Examination of Pleasure. A Translation of the *Philebus*, with Introduction and Commentary. By R. HACKFORTH, M.A. (Cambridge: at The University Press, 1945. Pp. vii + 144. Price 10s. 6d.)

It is very satisfactory that Professor Hackforth has donned the mantle of his predecessor in the Chair of Ancient Philosophy at Cambridge and carried

on the invaluable series of translations and exegeses of Plato's later dialogues. The present volume is not quite on the same scale as some of Professor Cornford's work, and the centre of interest is, perhaps, rather more in questions of history and elucidation of the text and less in the development of the philosophical implications of the argument. But it is marked, as we should expect, by careful scholarship and sound judgement, and places us much in debt to Professor Hackforth.

The *Philebus* is a most important dialogue. Like most of the dialogues it is primarily a *livre d'occasion*, a contribution to a current controversy. But it gives us the nearest approach that we can find to a summary of the latest form of Plato's ethical theory, and incidentally throws fresh light—rather a bewildering light, at times—on the metaphysical doctrine. The present volume, therefore, is particularly welcome. Any criticisms of it that there might be would be purely on matters of detail. I suspect that Professor Hackforth, like many other scholars, is a little too much inclined to take the Pythagoreans at their own valuation and to exaggerate their influence. Thus, I doubt whether the idea of the Infinite or Unlimited should necessarily be taken as a sign of Pythagorean influence. It was familiar in philosophy from the time of Anaximander onwards. Professor Hackforth's explanation of the puzzling account of the final scale of goods at the end of the dialogue is not completely satisfying. But no scholar has yet produced a completely satisfying explanation. These, however, at the most are small points on which difference of opinion will always be possible, and do nothing to detract from the general high quality of the work. It is to be hoped that we shall have more on the same lines from Professor Hackforth.

G. C. Field.

Science and Religion. By Herbert Dingle, D.Sc. (Published by The Union of Modern Free Churchmen. 1945. Pp. 22. Price 6d. net.)

In this pamphlet Professor Dingle tries, without taking sides, "to locate the source" of the conflict between Science and Religion. Leaving on one side special clashes, hoping to give readers a sporting chance of resolving these for themselves, he deals with the general problem created by our having two different, and largely incompatible, attitudes towards "what is essentially a homogeneous body of experience." Being in the main unconscious of this, the religious and scientific standpoints sometimes get mixed up and there is discord. In the Middle Ages such a duality did not trouble men who could comfortably include everything within one theological system. "Into this simple unison of thought there broke with the Renaissance the discordant note of modern science," with its independent direct appeal to experience. "A duality of outlook was introduced into the world, and the division thus created has never been repaired." One day the sciences, including the youngest, Psychology (which can handle religious experience scientifically) may give us a unified world-picture, but that day is not yet. (Philosophy will presumably synthesize the scientific data.) Meanwhile we must be "content with partial pictures, each limited to the experiences which provide its justification. There can then be no possibility of conflict." As religious experience does not warrant inferences as to physical laws or facts of history, Professor Dingle cautions theologians not to extend their theology beyond "the human experience which called it forth." Scientists likewise are told that their chief error "has been to condemn as illusory all experience which is not useful for their own restricted purposes." Professor Dingle has, in a short space, suggested a possible eirenicon. Those to whom his outlook appeals may well

share his hope that Science and Religion, combining their interpretations, may recover for us, "though in a very different form from that of mediaeval times, the unity of outlook which the advent of modern science took from us."

A. E. Elder.

Politics and Morals. By Benedetto Croce. Translated by Salvatore J. Castiglione. (New York: Philosophical Library Inc. 1945. Pp. 204. Price 3 dollars.)

Nothing that Croce writes can fail to give the reader an experience of intellectual refreshment; with age he has lost none of his remarkable vigour of mind, and his profound study of the modern Western world has given his thought something of the quality of a vision. It is not easy at this stage to say something fresh and revealing about the relation of politics and morals, but although the doctrine expounded in this book is not new, it is much more than a repetition of what others have tried to teach us. Starting from the view that political action is "action guided by the sense of what is useful and directed towards a utilitarian goal" (a view such as is to be found in Machiavelli) and its corollary that "political action *per se* cannot be qualified as either moral or immoral," Croce goes on to show that political action is never self-sufficient but exists always in the wider world of the moral consciousness and consequently policy is always unavoidably related to some moral ideas—the "cynical political man" is a mere abstraction. And "in this continuous transformation of morals into politics, which still remain politics, lies the real ethic progress of mankind." This theme is developed in what are, in effect, a number of essays rather than chapters in a continuous argument; and in the course of the exposition there are some brilliant pages on the modern history of the philosophy of politics.

The other great theme of the book is Liberalism. Anyone already familiar with Croce's writings will not find here much that is not more fully set out in larger works; but the discussion is always vigorous and profound. There are interesting chapters in the Contrasting Political Ideals since 1870 (in which the debt to Liberalism of all anti-Liberal thinking is shown), on the relation of Liberalism and free enterprise, and on The Bourgeoisie; an ill-defined historical concept, in which the ideas of Sombart and Groethuisen are examined.

Michael Oakeshott.

Kausalität und Zufall in der Philosophie des Aristoteles. By Helene Weiss. Verlag Haus zum Falken. Basel. 1942.

This is, in many respects, an out-of-the-way book. Printed in German in this country, with the help of British funds, it is published in Basle. The interest of the book lies in the fact that its authoress, now living in this country, applies Heidegger's method and philosophy to the interpretation of Aristotle. There is some irony in this fact. Heidegger himself had written a comprehensive work on Aristotle which never appeared in consequence of severe criticisms by Werner Jaeger and others. This new book is based on courses of lectures on Greek philosophy, all of them unpublished, but some of them circulating among the *initiés*. Two of them are in my hands. Heidegger's interpretation has three characteristics. Formally it is *bohrend*, exposed to the danger of getting *verbohrt* (i.e. his intellect is like a screw-driver which goes on boring even if it works in a wrong place). Further, it goes back to the original meaning of the Greek terms; a procedure which is sometimes illuminating, sometimes

misleading. It is elucidating to know that truth or ἀλήθεια is composed of ἀ and λήθω or λαθεῖν and that it means, that I speak the truth, if I do not hide anything; but it is misleading to derive from this etymology the thesis, that the nature of truth is *die Unverborgenheit des Seienden*. Lastly, the interpretation is ontological. It interprets Greek philosophy as being concerned from its beginnings with the problem of being. It asserts that there are certain important insights, hidden under a misleading tradition which have to be regained; and it claims that the clue for an understanding of the Greek ontology of the object is contained in Heidegger's ontology of the subject.

Miss Weiss applies this very same method, with its three characteristics, to an interpretation of the Aristotelian notions of *tyche* and *automaton*. She writes an introduction to an introduction to *Physics*, B 4–6. For the benefit of a future understanding of these three short chapters she discusses in four large chapters the notions of ἀρχή (*Phys.*, I), αἰτία, and ψυσις (*Phys*, II), πρᾶξις (*Nic. Ethics*), and συμβεβηκός (*Metaphysics*). The etymological vein prevails in the analysis of the last term. The remarks are to the point and interesting, though I doubt whether it is possible to confine this notion to the meaning "Mitanwesenheit bei einem anderen" ("co-presence with others") (p. 190). I have the feeling that the authoress mellows the acerbities and reduces the word-acrobatics of her master, and I must confess that I am favourably impressed by her penetrating understanding of the intricacies of Aristotle's thought. I only regret that she missed the opportunity of submitting her results, which should not be neglected by any serious student of the subject, to an English public.

I can discuss only one central point concerning Aristotle's ontology. Collingwood begins his *Essay on Metaphysics* with a critique of Aristotle which is not quite fair. He simplifies his thought in a manner which falsifies its very intentions. The conception of a pyramid of notions, which is based on *infimae species* and rises to *summa genera*, has been claimed as the basis of Aristotle's thought since Porphyry. But all the following statements are false, though excusable, as written on board S.S. *Rhesus*, off Cape St. Vincent. "Strictly speaking, there is only one *summum genus*. The ten 'categories' recognized by logic are the ten species of the genus being; they are the γένη τῶν ὄντων, the forms into which being is specified. Thus there is only one pyramid of universals, and at its peak the universal of being" (p. 9). We shall see presently that Aristotle himself contradicts all these statements. This is a point of capital importance for the future of philosophy. Collingwood is right in stating that there is no science of pure being, and in postulating a metaphysics without ontology, but he failed to prove his thesis, and he went wrong in concluding that Metaphysics is an Historical Science. In consequence of this failure the new books of Mr. Farrer and Miss Emmet seem totally unimpressed by Collingwood's critique. It is, indeed, impossible to convince an Aristotelian of the futility of ontological research by attacking a theory never held by Aristotle.

Heidegger and his followers have the merit of giving an ontological interpretation of Aristotle's whole philosophy (including physics and ethics) in which the notion of a science of being as being makes sense. They are in no way the first to do so, and I miss in the bibliography the important works of Brandis, Trendelenburg, and especially Brentano. Aristotle is infinitely more subtle than Collingwood would like to make us believe. He makes it abundantly clear that being as being is not a *genus*. In relation to the categories it is not a synonym, or a genus divided into species, but a homonym, which is differentiated according to its different senses. Nevertheless, if the word "being" is used in connection with the different categories, there is something

more in it than a mere identity of word, namely an identity of analogy. These different expressions of being are *ὁμώνυμα κατ' ἀναλογίαν*, or they are analogous in relation to one and the same nature. Aristotle seems to have had the following in mind. If I say of a quality, e.g. of red, that it is, I can say this only in reference to a substance, e.g. "a tomato is red." Consequently there is a specific sort of being, which has a preference and which therefore may be called "being as being," the *οὐσία*, or *πρώτη οὐσία*, or the individual substance. Aristotle is the great believer in individual substances, in metaphysics as well as in physics and biology. His assumption is, that if we want to say of anything that it is, it must be found, in one way or other, as inherent in a substance. This is, in fact, the common ground of his physics and metaphysics, and as such rightly stressed in this book. Miss Weiss adds the new remark, that the relation of *οὐσία* to *ὄν* is determined in the following manner: "Die *οὐσία* ist für das *ὄν* als *ὄν* das Ermöglichende" or "The essence has the function of making being as being possible." This relation is claimed as the centre of Aristotle's metaphysics. This thesis seems to me to contain a kernel of truth, in so far, namely, as it allows a closer co-ordination of the three definitions of metaphysics, as the science of being as being, as the science of first principles, and as theology, or the science of God as first substance, as was possible up to now. For it follows from it, that essence or being as being is itself a principle. This, however, follows only if we liberate the proposition from its incorrect formulation by saying, "The essence is being as being in the original and specific sense of the word, which makes possible any propositions concerning being in any derivative sense whatsoever." This "makes possible" should not be misunderstood, as if essence were equivalent to possibility, on the contrary, it is the first in time, in knowledge, and in logical connection, and therefore it may be separated. "Making possible" must be understood as "having priority," "coming first," or "serving as a starting-point." In other words, Aristotle's metaphysics is not a science of being as a *summum genus* or as a most abstract and empty notion, but a science of being in its non-derivative sense, which he believed to find in essence or substance. He knew perfectly well that words like "being," "reality," or "existence" have different meanings, but, nevertheless, he assumed that all these meanings refer to one fundamental meaning, and that it is possible to study in detail the interrelations between the fundamental meaning and its derivations.

I do not say that Aristotle was right in making these assumptions, but I do say that this it was what Aristotle meant by his science of being as being. In so far as this book helps us to understand what Aristotle's ontology really was, we should be grateful to it. We certainly shall not regret, like Miss Weiss, that Aristotle did not become a pupil of Heidegger's. But even if we are convinced that he was mistaken on this topic we cannot but profit from his penetrating analysis, his differentiation of meanings, his power of abstraction and his observation of details. We shall only succeed in convincing people that ontology is impossible, if we attack Aristotle on his own ground. This task still lies before us.

F. H. Heinemann.

Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association: Vol. XIX: *Philosophy in Post-War Reconstruction.* (Washington, D.C.; $2.00).

Could a League of Philosopher-Kings do for the world what a League of Nations has failed to do? Certain it is that without a philosophical foundation the best-laid schemes of statesmen and economists are bound to fail. Only

when the nature of man is understood, as the metaphysician and ethicist understands it and not after the fashion of the behaviourist and the chemist, will there be much hope of an enduring peace. That is a brief statement of the theme of this latest volume from the Catholic Philosophical Association of America. Naturally in such a collection of necessarily brief papers there is little possibility of detailed or elaborate exposition, but within the limits set there is much that is of value. An able paper by Professor Pegis deals with the failure of the mediaeval Schoolmen to work out an adequate scheme of International Law, a failure that was repaired by the work of the post-Reformation Suarez, who wrote, three hundred years ago, an analysis of the meaning and basis of International Law which has not been surpassed. A number of ancillary problems—"The Christian Concept of Law," "Liberalism," "A Philosophy of Education"—are competently dealt with. As the author of the last-named paper reminds us: "The essential work of the philosopher is not national in character. There is no possibility of discussing the thought of an Aquinas, an Augustine, or a Socrates in purely local terms; these men and their thought belong to all humanity." The presence of the word "Catholic" on the title-page should not therefore suggest a sectarianism or parochialism of outlook. The Catholic Church has proved herself an able guardian of the *philosophia perennis*. THOMAS CORBISHLEY.

Our Knowledge of Universals. By R. I. AARON. (Annual Philosophical Lecture, Henriette Hertz Trust, British Academy. 1945, Pp. 28. 2s. 6d. net. From the Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. XXXI. London: Humphrey Milford.)

This is a very interesting lecture which deserves to be carefully read and pondered over. If any reader supposes that nothing new can now be said on such a well-worn subject, he will certainly find that he is mistaken. I must confess at once that some of Professor Aaron's terminology causes me considerable discomfort. He talks about "vague" universals, and about "dispositional" universals. We are told that universals "have meaning" (as if they were symbols, or signs) and that some have more of it than others; that some universals are "observed", whereas others are "constructed" by the human mind; and that among the constructed ones there are some mathematical universals which are "necessary" (as if they were not universals, but universal propositions). Some of these adjectives could very well be applied to concepts or ideas, and some to general symbols; but I confess that it gives me the shivers when *universals* are spoken of in such language. No doubt the word "universal" has been used in several different senses, as Professor Aaron points out. But have any of its senses been quite so queer as this?

I hasten to add, however, that any other reader who shares these feelings of discomfort should firmly disregard them. For a number of questions are discussed in this lecture which are ignored or barely noticed in traditional treatments of "the Problem of Universals". They are important questions too, and they are discussed in a fresh and thought-provoking manner. Moreover, the author's choice of terminology, whether wise or not, is at least defensible. He is deliberately refusing to take sides in the metaphysical controversy concerning the nature of universals. He says explicitly that he will not ask whether they are *ante rem* or *in re* or *post rem*. He thinks that there are important *epistemological* questions about universals which can perfectly well be discussed on their own account, whatever view we may

take about this ontological issue. Perhaps he is right; though I still think that in discussing them he would have done better to use a terminology of "concepts" or "general symbols".

He begins with what he calls "discovered" or "observed" universals. Consider the concept of a specific shade of red. The traditional view is that we acquire this concept by abstraction. Professor Aaron does not agree. Here are two objects which sensibly appear to have the same specific shade of red. The identity of this shade, he says, is *observed* as much as the two objects themselves. (It is worth remarking that there need not be *two* objects. It is sufficient to consider one object, or even one colour-patch, which is uniform or monotonous in colour.) On grounds of economy, he rejects the view that the qualities of objects are as particular as the objects themselves. The specific shade of colour is in two different places at the same time, and I just observe it to be so. "I observe the recurrence of the identical colour" (p. 5). Likewise I frequently observe the recurrence of an identical *relation*. I observe that the very same relation, e.g., "being inside of", is present in two different complexes. Professor Aaron admits that some people might call this "observing *that* so and so is the case" rather than just "observing". But he thinks that the two differ only in degree.

He insists, further, that he is not here talking about the "real" world. It may be that *in rerum natura* there are no recurrent identities, but only more or less close resemblances. But in the world as we observe it, one identical colour does often recur; and this is experienceably different from the situation (likewise often observed) in which one colour merely resembles another. He then says that the word "identical", as he is here using it, is synonymous with "indistinguishable". He concludes that our awareness of some universals of quality and relation is as primitive as our awareness of particulars. And it is observation, not abstraction. Our awareness of these universals, he says, is a concrete experience, not an abstract one. (He tells us later that the same is true of our awareness of some "thing" universals, for example *man* or *bed*.) It is clear that this is one of the main contentions of his paper, and that he attaches great importance to it.

Here again I think his choice of terminology unfortunate. How could an experience—an actual psychical event—be anything but concrete? When he says that the experiences in question are "not abstract", I think he means that they are not *abstractive*; that they are not, or do not result from, experiences of abstracting. For the experience of abstracting, or the experience of conceiving which results from it, is itself as concrete as any perception or emotion; what is abstract is its object, or if you prefer, its content. Well then, is there or is there not such a thing as a non-abstractive awareness of universals? In a way there is. But when Professor Aaron calls it *observing*, I think this is an even more unfortunate piece of terminology. A better name would be something like *felt familiarity*. This does seem to be something primitive, or at any rate more primitive than explicit abstraction. Whether you call it a "knowledge" of universals or not, seems to be a verbal question. If you do, you must say that it is confused knowledge; you must also say that it is pre-verbal or pre-symbolic and that animals, as well as men, can acquire it. If on the other hand you refuse to call it knowledge, you will have difficulty in showing how knowledge of universals develops at all, or what it develops out of.

What of indistinguishability and identity? Here, I believe, we cannot afford to be quite so agnostic about the "real world" as Professor Aaron would wish to be. Perhaps it is only a methodological agnosticism; but if we took it seriously, could we even know what is meant by the word "real", in

this usage? Could we even ask ourselves the question whether phenomenal indistinguishabilities correspond, or do not correspond, to objective identities? Professor Aaron does ask himself this question, though he refuses to answer it. I would suggest that this "non-distinguishing" is better described in positive terms, as a confused awareness of a real identity. Further experience —and experience of the same general kind, not some mysterious looking behind the phenomenal veil—often shows us that the identity we were confusedly aware of was only a *generic* identity, and that the two objects or situations in which we discovered it were *specifically* diverse. This is in line with what Professor Aaron himself says later.

He next turns to what he calls universals "of things" (substantival concepts would perhaps be a better name). The discussion of these is perhaps the most instructive part of Professor Aaron's lecture. He insists, rightly I think, that we *are* aware of universals of things, and not merely of universals of quality and relation. Many philosophers, he admits, have denied this. A thing-universal would have to be a complex universal, and according to these thinkers there are no complex universals; there are only complexes of universals, and their constituents are nothing but universals of quality and relation. A thing-word, e.g. "man" or "table," stands for such a complex.

To this objection Professor Aaron makes a very interesting reply, which I will summarize at some length. These philosophers, he says, have confused "vague" universals with "precise" ones; they have also confused "experienced" universals (*sic*) with those which result from a conscious activity of intellectual construction. The word *man*, for example, may either stand for an explicitly and consciously worked out concept; or it may stand for a vaguely apprehended whole (a "vague whole" as Professor Aaron himself calls it). Such vaguely apprehended wholes do *recur* in the world which we observe, just as qualities and relations recur. Indeed, our awareness of them is if anything more primitive than our awareness of qualities and relations. Later on, by a process which may be called either analysis or synthesis (it is really both at once) we explicitly distinguish various qualities and relations within this "vague whole". And so we "construct" a new concept of *man* or *bed* or *house* or whatever sort of Thing it may be; or, if you like, we reconstruct the original vague one. Even then, however, our thing-concept is never completely precise. Complete precision can only be found—if ever—in such mathematical concepts as *circle*, and these are not thing-concepts. There must always be a residue of vagueness in the constituent qualities and relations which make up our "constructed" concept of *man* or *bed*. Nor are we ever quite sure which qualities or relations should be put in and which should be left out. In the next instance of manhood or bedhood that we meet, one or other of them may be missing; and yet we may still be quite sure that it *is* an instance of the thing-concept in question. (Here a reference to Locke's doctrine of Nominal Essences would surely have been helpful.) Finally, there is one other factor which can never in any case be made precise. This is the "uniqueness" or "individuality" which every instance of a thing-concept possesses.

I think there is a great deal in this which is true and important. I will make three remarks on it. First, Professor Aaron is quite right to emphasize the *vagueness* of many of our concepts. It is true, as he says, that philosophers have paid too little attention to vagueness. It is not true, however, that they have paid none at all. For example, a good deal has been said on the subject by Lord Russell in *The Analysis of Mind* and elsewhere, as also by Ribot in his *Evolution of General Ideas*. One wishes that Professor Aaron had considered what those writers have to say; the views of Ribot, in particular, seem very close to his own.

Secondly, I cannot believe there is much in the point about uniqueness. It is what Mr. Wisdom would call a pseudo-lament. For uniqueness is *ex vi termini* something which cannot be conceptually apprehended. It is not something which we ought to be able to conceive if only we were more clever than we are, as Professor Aaron seems to suggest. I think that what he is really talking about here is not uniqueness, but the categorial concept of substance itself. If we omit this from our "constructed" or "reconstructed" thing-concept, and reduce our Thing to nothing but a complex of qualities and relations, there is certainly something wrong with our concept; not because it is imprecise, however (though very likely it is imprecise as well), but because we have committed a downright error.

Thirdly, I think that Professor Aaron, like others, has been somewhat misled by the word "construct". All explicit thing-concepts are, if you like, constructed. But the word "construct" has to do duty for two quite different intellectual activities, and he discusses only one of them. The one he does discuss is more naturally called *clarification* than construction. (Cf. his own phrase "transparent to the intellect", p. 25 *med.*) The other *is* very naturally called construction, but he omits it. It is the process which occurs when we form the concept of *dragon*, for example; or when an inventor conceives of a new sort of machine, of which there is as yet no actual instance, e.g. the concept of an aircraft propelled by atomic energy. These are thing-concepts. But they do not arise by the clarification of a "vague whole" already encountered in experience. In their case, the definition comes first and the concept afterwards; whereas with such a concept as *man* or *toadstool* it is the other way round. In both cases a conscious intellectual activity is needed, so that the word "construction" is a natural one to use; but not the same sort of intellectual activity. It is a combinatory activity in the one case, a clarificatory activity in the other.

I have only space for one more point. In his discussion of thing-concepts Professor Aaron makes some very intriguing remarks about what he calls "the dispositional universal". Here we have an intermediate stage between the vague awareness of recurrent wholes, on the one hand, and the explicit construction of reconstruction of a concept out of precisely differentiated elements, on the other. Our awareness of a dispositional universal (or is it our dispositional awareness of a universal?) is something which is built up unconsciously or subconsciously by habit; it is acquired by observing many recurrences of a "vague whole" in many different contexts and situations. When we have reached this stage, our concept is able to guide our expectations and our actions, in a way it could not do when it was just a "vague whole" and no more. Its constituent elements have been to some extent differentiated, though not by any conscious and deliberate effort, and there is a strong "dispositional tie" between them. The effect of this tie is that when, for example, we see a house in a rainstorm, we *expect* to find shelter inside it, although we do not at the moment observe the inside.

Here again Professor Aaron's terminology seems unfortunate, even if we substitute "concept" for "universal". For in one very natural sense of the word "dispositional", all concepts whatever have a dispositional character. Once I have acquired the concept of redness, I possess it continuously thereafter, even at times when I am not actually thinking of it at all; and at such times my possession of it just consists in having a certain disposition or set of dispositions, e.g. the disposition to recognize fresh instances when presented or to assent to the proposition "red differs from blue". I think that the point Professor Aaron has in mind is much more happily expressed by Lord Russell, who remarks somewhere that such words as "dog" stand for *condensed*

inductions, in a way that words like "white" and "red" do not. Obviously with a word such as "dog" or "house" the inductions have never been consciously formulated. We did not *say* to ourselves "whoever looks like this also barks, bites, pursues rats, etc.," or "whatever has doors and windows will provide shelter in a rainstorm." But whether you call it inductive or not, our understanding of such a word as "dog" or "house" does arise from a repeated experience of concomitances; and not from mere simple enumeration either, for the instances are encountered in a variety of different contexts, and accidental conjunctions are eliminated while constant conjunctions are retained. Moreover, whether you call it inductive or not, it does generate expectations and it does give guidance to our actions, as Professor Aaron rightly insists. When we next meet a dog or a house we shall know more or less what to do and what to expect. Of course, you may say if you like that the process by which such concepts are acquired is habit rather than induction; Professor Aaron himself calls it habit. But I think we should be nearer the truth if we said that in a way it is both, and that it belongs to a level of mental life at which cognition and action are not yet differentiated. So far as I can see, Professor Aaron only differs from Lord Russell in holding that these quasi-inductions are concerned with concomitances *inside* a "vague whole" (i.e. a vaguely apprehended whole) which we are aware of already; and here he may well be right.

However this may be, the topic which Professor Aaron is here discussing under the queer title of "dispositional universals" is certainly one to which all students of the human mind (and the animal mind) ought to pay careful attention. The things he has to say about it are among the most important and interesting parts of his lecture; though here, as elsewhere, the insight he is trying to convey to us is sometimes concealed, rather than revealed, by the queer terminology in which he presents it.

H. H. Price.

INSTITUTE NOTES

PROFESSOR G. F. STOUT

Although the death of Professor G. F. Stout in 1944 was mentioned in the Annual Report of the Institute for 1944–45, we regret the omission to inform readers of the Journal of this lamentable event earlier. Professor Stout's distinguished work in the realm of psychology and philosophy is well known amongst all English-speaking peoples. Professor Stout was a Fellow of the British Academy, Honorary Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of St. Andrews.

THE COMING OF AGE OF THE INSTITUTE

The following letter appeared in *The Times* on Saturday, April 6, 1946.

To the Editor of "The Times"

SIR,—On April 6 of this year the British Institute of Philosophy comes of age. Founded under the presidency of the late Lord Balfour, its council has been throughout composed of leading representatives, not only of philosophy, but also of science, of politics, and of industry and commerce. For 21 years the Institute has been active in promoting the purposes for which it was established—to serve as a link between philosophers and the everyday world, and to spread such general understanding as can be reached of the universe in which we live and of man's place in it. There have been continuous courses of lectures for students on the various branches of philosophy, and popular addresses on fundamental issues, drawing large audiences and evoking discussion. Local branches have been formed in several cities. *Philosophy*, the quarterly journal of the Institute, contains articles by writers of distinction on the great philosophical questions, as well as reviews by specialists of the important new books on such subjects, published in this or other countries. The journal enjoys a considerable circulation outside the membership and beyond our own shores.

Throughout the war years the work of the Institute was continued to the extent that the difficult conditions allowed, although it suffered the same shrinkage of membership as other such societies. The numbers still exceed 1,000; but that is far too few to enable the Institute to fulfil adequately the objects it exists to promote. The annual subscription is only one guinea, which includes receipt of the journal, and there is no entrance fee. The income so derived is plainly insufficient, but the council are reluctant to raise the terms of membership for fear of causing a further contraction. The right remedy is the opposite—a large increase in the number of members. It is in order to appeal to those interested to join the Institute that this letter is written.

There must be great numbers of men and women in all walks of life who recognize that our age is a time of intellectual and moral confusion, and that this is the root cause of its troubles and disasters. Some may take refuge in a passive and futile pessimism; others may be tempted to plunge into some desperate kind of revolutionary action, more likely to make things still worse. To build up a body of positive, instead of merely critical, thought, as a basis for well-considered constructive action in the spheres of morals, of politics, and of economics, is the only right course. In this a leading part should be played by British philosophy, which has won much distinction in the past, and may render still greater service in the future, in formulating thought and linking it with action. But an organization is needed to furnish a platform for discussion and to disseminate ideas. The British Institute of Philosophy is such an organization. What is now necessary is a reinforcement of its numbers as a means to reinvigorating its action.

Application for further information and forms of membership should be made to the Director of Studies, The British Institute of Philosophy, University Hall, 14, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

Yours faithfully,

SAMUEL (President), W. D. ROSS (Chairman), LINDSAY OF BIRKER (Deputy-Chairman).

April 4.

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MESSAGE TO READERS

An appeal for new members, through the good offices of *The Times* and other journals, was launched on April 6, the 21st anniversary of the birthday of the Institute. Readers of the Journal will be interested to know that this appeal has brought in, to date, about 550 new members of the Institute.

The Institute has no endowments, and its work cannot be carried on from revenue derived solely from subscriptions of £1 1s. per annum. The war has not only reduced the income of the Institute, but increased the cost of its work. For example, in regard to the production of the Journal alone, printing costs have increased by 66⅔ per cent, and the cost of paper by 110 per cent, since 1939. In order that the generous services provided by the Institute may be carried on, and especially that the Journal may be restored to its original format and number of issues as soon as possible, the Council looks forward to a steady increase in the number of subscribers. It also calls the attention of readers to the need of donations, small and large, and to the great benefit which the Institute would derive in the future from bequests.

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